

## **NEWS:**

# **Second Time's the Charm for Bill Seeking to Ban Breed-specific Dog Rules**

**MARCH 24, 2017** – A bill that seeks to have dogs judged on their individual behavior and not their breed's characteristics has cleared the State House of Representatives.

[House Bill 13](#) inserts a new provision into the section of the Delaware Code dealing with "maintaining a dangerous animal." The new language specifically prohibits a dog from being "considered dangerous or potentially dangerous" solely based on the dog's actual or perceived breed.

The bill also seeks to bar any Delaware municipality from enacting a law, ordinance, or regulation that would place restrictions on dogs based on breed.

State Rep. Ruth Briggs King, R-Georgetown, one of the bill's co-sponsors, said it would create uniformity statewide, avoiding a patchwork of rules that could differ from one jurisdiction to the next.

"I really think we need to focus on the animal and the animal owner individually and not just do any kind of action based on an entire breed," Rep. Briggs King said. "Having a pit bull terrier in the family, I realize ... it's the animal and how it is raised and not simply the breed. I thought this was a very important bill to do for dog owners."

It took two attempts for the legislation to clear the chamber. Requiring a two-thirds majority, the measure needed a minimum of 28 votes to pass. On the first attempt Tuesday, it failed on a vote of 25 to 12. Brought up for reconsideration Thursday, it garnered 30 favorable votes to 10 dissenting.

State Rep. Rich Collins, R-Millsboro, was among those opposing the bill. "I see this as an issue of local control," he said. "Unless there is a compelling reason to do so, state government should not remove the ability of local governments to respond to local situations and concerns."

Rep. Collins added that the defeat of the bill would not have resulted in any state action against any breed of dog. "It would have just maintained the status quo, preserving the ability of town and city residents to make these determinations for themselves," he said.

The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration in committee.



**State Rep. Ruth  
Briggs King**