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(Hansard)**

**Monday 15 November 2004**

**Lundi 15 novembre 2004**

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Monday 15 November 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 15 novembre 2004

*The House met at 1845.*

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED TO DOGS  
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004 MODIFIANT DES LOIS  
EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA SÉCURITÉ  
PUBLIQUE RELATIVE AUX CHIENS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 4, 2004, on the motion for second reading of Bill 132, An Act to amend the Dog Owners' Liability Act to increase public safety in relation to dogs, including pit bulls, and to make related amendments to the Animals for Research Act / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la responsabilité des propriétaires de chiens pour accroître la sécurité publique relativement aux chiens, y compris les pit-bulls, et apportant des modifications connexes à la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Jerry J. Ouellette):** It's time for questions and comments.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I'm going to be having the floor in around 10 minutes' time for the leadoff on behalf of the New Democratic Party and I'm looking forward to it.

I am incredibly concerned about the manner and style with which the government has pursued this particular legislative endeavour, a level of hysteria that, I tell you, is not becoming of the Attorney General and the government members.

New Democrats are as eager as anybody in this Legislature—and I, quite frankly, would not accept anybody pointing a finger and suggesting that somehow anybody here, whether it's a Conservative, a New Democrat or a Liberal, hasn't got an interest in protecting people against attacks by vicious, dangerous animals. But we take great quarrel with the observation that if you're not for the bill, then you must somehow be for attacks by dogs on kids. Bull feathers, rot, garbage. What an embarrassing stance for the government to take.

New Democrats have been very clear: Let's see the evidence, let's hear from the experts, because so far we've heard the hyperbole that's written by the minions in the backroom, sitting at their PCs, crafting the spin-doctoring statements and press releases. Let's hear from the Canadian veterinary association; let's hear from the SPCA. Let's hear from experts in animal breeding about

the nature of dogs and the history of dogs; let's hear from the American expertise, because, quite frankly, I have scoured the available research and found little of any substance to date that supports the government's approach to this very serious issue of breed-specific banning. I found scarce support for that.

This is far too important an issue. Shame on members who would create law on the basis of emotion and fears that have been fabricated and victims who have been exploited. Let's do it on the basis of science and reason, please.

**Mr Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** This is a continuation of the debate from the week before last on Bill 132.

Just looking at the title of the bill, it says, "An Act to amend the Dog Owners' Liability Act to increase public safety in relation to dogs, including pit bulls, and to make related amendments to the Animals for Research Act." I think there's a lot still to be discussed in this bill. The title does include pit bulls, but the title also talks about dogs and public safety in general. I see no problem with debating this issue. I think it's worthwhile to look at it.

**1850**

There have been attacks on individuals throughout Ontario by pit bulls and, yes, there have been attacks by other types of dogs. But let's debate this bill. Let's hear from all sides and, if necessary, go to committee and look at possible—

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Don't dream about that, buddy.

**Mr Berardinetti:** The honourable member for Simcoe North has referred to me as "buddy," Mr Speaker. It's kind of inappropriate to be referred to as "buddy," but with all due respect, I take "buddy" in a friendly way from the member from Simcoe North.

Anyway, I think that when we debate this further, sure, we can look at amendments and we can look at and hear from, hopefully, other experts on this issue, but it's an issue that needs to be addressed. This government has decided that it wants to address this issue and look at this issue. The alternative would be to just do nothing, and I think that's wrong.

We're moving in the right direction. A bill has been put forward. The Attorney General is moving in the right direction. Let's hear what the other parties have to say, and let's prepare a law that is most appropriate for this province.

**Mr Dunlop:** I'm pleased to rise this evening. I'm going to tell you right up front, and I'll say this a number

of times through my comments this evening: In its present form, there's no way that I would ever support this bill.

Listening to the previous speaker making his two-minute comments, to even dream that we wouldn't go to committee on this bill would be unthinkable in this House. You insinuated, "if" it gets to committee. It should get to committee, and one thing I'm really looking forward to is hearing the comments from the government on why they're going to support this bill in its present form.

I know that we've got a lot of 20-minute rotations—three or four days of them—and some 10-minute rotations. We expect you to use your full 20 minutes and 10 minutes to make sure you get these points across. Don't cut it off at seven or eight minutes into a 20-minute speech and say, "That's all we're going to do tonight." We want to hear all the reasons, 20 minutes of reasons why you would actually support this piece of legislation.

It's important, because we want to debate this bill. It's a very important bill. It's one that wasn't in your election platform. That's the first thing. There are hundreds and hundreds of promises you made, most of which you've broken so far, but in the meantime you've come up with this little bill, the pit bull terrier bill. I can't support it in its present form and look forward to all the comments you'll make in trying to change my mind on this.

On the other hand, I know that it's done for political purposes. Simply, the Attorney General needed to bring forth something positive. It helps his political career, because he thinks he has the support of all the citizens of Ontario on his side. When they toss out Mr McGuinty as the leader, he'll be one of the people on the sidelines looking to be the leader of that party over there. I fully believe that that's what will happen.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Dunlop:** Yeah? Well, you mark my words: Mr Bryant's name will be on the ballot after Mr McGuinty is long gone.

Thank you very much. I look forward to a lot of debate on this.

**Mr David Zimmer (Willowdale):** Let me speak to the reasonableness of this bill, because the previous speaker and some of the other speakers in the opposition have unnecessarily rung alarm bells that somehow this legislation is unreasonable, over the top, intrusive.

It's important to keep in mind that the legislation is very reasonable. It asks pit bull owners to do a few simple things. It says, "Look, if you've got a pit bull, keep it on a leash." Is that unreasonable? Is that onerous? It says to the pit bull owner, "In addition to the leash, if you take it out in public, put a muzzle on it." Is that unreasonable? It also says to the pit bull owner, "If you want to keep the pit bull, have it spayed or neutered." Is that unreasonable? My office has checked around on the cost of that. It's about \$150 or \$200 to spay or neuter a pit bull.

The other thing that we're asking—we're telling people what the legislation says—is that if you've got a

pit bull and you leash it, muzzle it and spay or neuter it, you can keep it for its natural lifetime. In the meantime, you can't breed them and you can't import them. The pit bull will naturally die out. We recognize the rights and the sensibilities of existing pit bull owners.

This is a small price to pay to ensure the safety of children, adults walking in the park, people in schoolyards and police officers who have to investigate these things. It's a matter of a leash, a muzzle and getting it spayed or neutered, and you can keep your pit bull and the rest of us are protected. It is a reasonable piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford has two minutes to wrap up.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'd like respond to the comments by the members from Niagara Centre, Scarborough Southwest, Simcoe North and Willowdale.

I've heard today, in terms of the lack of consultation—I think that's what the member from Niagara Centre was talking about: the manner and style, the lack of consultation with the key stakeholder groups. I got a letter today from Tim Trow, the president of the Toronto Humane Society, who makes a number of valid points. He says that humane societies won't be able to shelter and find homes as they have been able to do for generations. Instead, hapless pets will be destroyed or sent by municipal pounds for use as subjects in research experiments. Section 6 of the bill says pit bulls can only be surrendered/abandoned to a municipal pound, not to humane societies. Section 17: A humane society inspector "who seizes a dog ... shall promptly deliver the seized dog to a" municipal "pound." Subsections 8(1) and (2): The pounds can keep pit bulls, and research facilities can requisition them. We're talking about some fairly serious inroads into the normal practice with respect to the protection of animals.

The member from Scarborough Southwest talked about public hearings. The Attorney General the other day committed to public hearings. I think he should commit to three weeks of public hearings all across the province to make sure there's some meaningful discussion.

The member from Willowdale talks about muzzling and leashing. The current law under the dog owners' occupation is under the municipalities. They do those things right now: muzzling and leashing. The problem with this bill is that it misrepresents what's going on. They haven't done anything substantive with respect to changing the Dog Owners' Liability Act other than increasing fines. People out there think this is all new and all changed. Nothing has been changed with respect to the protection of the public. All he's talking about is, "I'm going to ban pit bulls. You're all going to be safe." This bill is flawed—it's got too many questions—and I can tell you it has not changed the existing law with respect to protecting the public. It's a mug's game, and I can tell you the Attorney General is misleading the public.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Kormos:** I appreciate this opportunity to speak to this bill and what I sincerely hope is the beginning of a thorough debate around the merits of this legislation. Again I want to make it very clear on behalf of the New Democrats, and I'll be bold enough to say, that I don't believe there's a member of this Legislature, not a member, regardless of their political affiliation, who isn't sincerely interested in controlling, if not bringing an end to, attacks by vicious dogs, dangerous dogs, vicious animals, on people, especially kids.

The issue, quite frankly, is whether the breed-specific ban being proposed by the government achieves that end. It's really quite simple; it's as simple as that. Does the breed-specific ban—the banning of pit bulls and their kin, I suppose, or pit bulls, their kin and dogs that look like pit bulls—achieve the end? I've got to tell you, I am waiting to discover the pieces of empirical data that confirm that.

With the assistance of staff who have worked very, very hard, and the input of any number of folks and groups out there across Ontario and beyond, let's do a brief list: The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals says that the legislation, the breed-specific ban, doesn't address breeding for aggression, training for fighting or other issues related to responsible ownership. It indicates that the bill is not statistically supported.

The Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, a group of professionals, well-trained professionals, people working with dogs and other animals on a daily basis, is very specific in its opposition to this legislation and the breed-specific ban. Veterinarians in this province indicate that bans won't help, that education and non-breed-specific dangerous dog legislation is required to generate the public safety desired.

The Canadian Kennel Club, opposed to the ban; Dog Legislation Council of Canada, opposed to the ban; Toronto Humane Society, opposed to the ban; Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, opposed to the ban; Canada Safety Council, which addresses public safety issues across the board and has no particular affinity to or affection for dogs or cats or any other animal, opposed to the ban, not out of any particular sympathy for any particular dog or breed of dogs, but because they say it won't work to achieve the goal that this government tells us they're interested in achieving.

#### 1900

We go beyond these Canadian and Ontario authorities and we discover the Atlanta Centers for Disease Control in the United States, with a population 10 times that of Canada, acknowledging that there is, again, somewhat difficult data available: "Targeting a specific breed may be unproductive. A more effective approach may be to target chronically irresponsible dog owners."

The American Veterinary Medical Association: "Singling out one or two breeds for control can result in a false sense of accomplishment and create a false sense of security." They point out, of course, that "dogs from

small breeds also bite and are capable of causing severe injury."

I've got a little more to come. I want to go back to April 29, 1998, a tragic day for so many people in Stouffville, Ontario. A little girl, Courtney Trempe, eight years old, was killed in a dog attack. The dog lunged at her neck. This poor little girl died from massive blood loss and asphyxiation. The dog was eventually put down, of course. The owner was devastated. What a vicious, cruel way for anybody to die, especially a little kid. How frightening that must have been. How frightening. How incredibly terrifying. But you see, it wasn't a pit bull that killed Courtney Trempe; it was a bull mastiff, a dog which is not contemplated in this legislation. Ban pit bulls all you want; it's of little comfort to the kid who's then mauled or mauled to death by a dog of another breed that's a vicious dog. Banning pit bulls is of little comfort to the kid who's mauled or mauled to death by a vicious dog of another breed.

The remarkable thing, and the very valuable result, was in the Courtney Trempe coroner's jury and the recommendations that they made. It is a document that I wish this government had spent a little more time with. If the government isn't going to do it and the minister isn't going to do it, I wish the members of that caucus would do it. It's a document that the members of that Liberal caucus should spend a little bit of time studying.

I'm going to make some references to it in just a minute. But before I do that, I'm going to make reference to a March 2002 CBC broadcast that reported on the follow-up to the tragic death of Courtney Trempe, who was attacked by a vicious dog: not a pit bull but a bull mastiff, a breed that is not being contemplated by this legislation.

It indicates that a federal study suggests that for the well-trusted family dog, as compared to the strange dog that's encountered, the trust is grossly misplaced. That study finds that family dogs, the dogs that the family knows and trusts, are the worst offenders for bites and attacks on people, on members of that family. The most common biters, according to this federal study, are German shepherds, cocker spaniels, Rottweilers and golden retrievers. The pit bull doesn't make the top four, according to this study.

This is the whole point. If this study is inaccurate, then let the government stand up and legitimately point out the flaws in that study or its conclusions. All I know is that down where I come from, where, yes, common sense—nonwithstanding it was hijacked for eight years by those guys; you know who I'm talking about—prevails, people understand that the goal has got to be to rein in and control vicious or dangerous dogs of any breed rather than the panacea of banning pit bulls that don't even make the top four in this federal study.

It's noted here that other than Rottweilers, those breeds named—shepherds, cocker spaniels and retrievers—are among the most common in Canadian homes. In fact, in that same report by the CBC in 2002, John and Donna Trempe, the parents of poor Courtney, were

interviewed, and they're not so sure that banning breeds is the answer. Donna Trempe said, "There's always going to be the good and the bad, I think, in any breed. I don't think you're ever going to ban every dog that's going to bite; you should be responsible for it." The owner of that bull mastiff that killed Courtney, that was put down promptly, said, "When you look at the statistics of dog bites—bull mastiffs don't even sort of show up on the radar. They're below dogs like cocker spaniels in terms of bites. The problem is it might be a lot like trying to swat a fly with a sledgehammer. Once you start banning breeds, where do you draw the line?"

I have yet to see any serious and legitimate data that support the proposition that a breed-specific ban presents itself as the solution that the Attorney General sure as heck says it does, but with not a bit, not a scintilla, of evidence.

The Courtney Trempe jurors heard all of the horrible details of her death, but also heard from a significant number of experts and considered and contemplated a whole lot of expertise, and the jury went on with an extensive list of recommendations. I've got them here. I'm not going to read them all, because I only have an hour. It's not my idea to only give me an hour. Those are the rules. That's what the rule changes did. I didn't support the rule changes. You understand that. But I only have an hour.

The Courtney Trempe jurors said that education is imperative, that the Minister of Education require all Ontario boards of education to implement a student education program in elementary schools for the prevention of dog bites, so the kids understand what they can and can't do, especially with a strange animal, or their own family dog, and how they can deal with an aggressive dog or a dog that poses a danger to them.

It goes on to recommend that children's television programming include similar sorts of education inserted throughout. Among other things, they recommend that the Ontario College of Family Physicians undertake to educate their members in this matter, in view of the fact that infants and young children are the most frequent victims of dog bites by all breeds.

#### 1910

I've got to tell you, I've been bitten by dogs many times, because I've been canvassing door to door since I was 12 years old; I have. That's 40 years of knocking on doors during election campaigns. You can't work that many election campaigns across Ontario in as many cities as I have without being bitten by dogs of all shapes, sizes, colours and breeds, let me tell you. Inevitably, I knock on the door and some wonderful, nice elderly woman will answer. The dog will be barking, as it's supposed to, and she'll say, "Oh, don't worry. He doesn't bite."

I remember the sucker in the by-election up there in Nickel Belt, and this little terrier knew I was wearing cowboy boots, because it leaped up and got me on top of the calf, right above the boot. This woman was accepting a lawn sign for the candidate I'm canvassing for. The dog

latched on to me, and I swear it was swinging sideways. I could feel the blood starting to warm the back of my leg. The dog wouldn't let go. I thought, "You damned dog." It knew I was wearing boots and got me just above the cowboy boot. A pair of slacks was of no use after that. She got a lawn sign, though. That was no pit bull, I tell you. That was one of those mommy's little puppies.

**Mr Dunlop:** It was probably a chihuahua.

**Mr Kormos:** Yes. How many of us have pulled into a country yard and seen that farm yard dog just barking? I'm not getting out of my pickup until somebody who looks like they know that dog comes to the door of my truck. That dog is doing what it's supposed to do. Never mind when you're a kid, trying to sneak into the Pelina and Mataya junkyard down at the end of East Main Street so you can steal those spinner knobs off the steering wheels; I've had more than one youthful encounter with the literal, not proverbial, junkyard dog. I'm not trying to minimize the impact of dog bites.

I appreciate that any confrontation with a dog is incredibly frightening, especially for a kid, and can be traumatic. But what I'm trying to illustrate is that my anecdotal experience, like I suspect most people's in this room and most of those folks watching, is that you don't have to be any particular breed of dog to bite. You've got to be reared in a certain way, maybe bred in a certain way, treated in a certain way or, as Ms Martel more appropriately points out, mistreated or designed to do a particular job or simply be with an owner who doesn't understand the capacity of his or her animal.

The fact is that these are domesticated animals. These weren't, in terms of their history, natural family pets. It seems to me, when you go on a little more, that the Trempe jury recommendations ought to be given a whole lot more weight in the course of this debate than the government has given them so far.

I repeat, I am incredibly concerned about the manner in which the Attorney General trotted out this legislation. I was at that press conference. Oh, he marched in there, by God. He had the press gallery and the lights and the flash bulbs flashing, and he did his "Pit bulls banned, pit bulls banned." I understand working the media; trust me. I understand trying to grab a clip in that evening's television news and the things that you have to do from time to time to get that clip. But now that the press conference is over and now that we're here debating this legislation, let's look at the evidence. That's all I ask, and I don't think that's an incredibly unfair request.

Where's the evidence, I say to the parliamentary assistant, that supports this legislation?

**Mr Zimmer:** Give me my two minutes.

**Mr Kormos:** Ah, two minutes. Mr Zimmer says, "Two minutes." That's about all the time he'll need to present the evidence, because there's only two minutes' worth of evidence. That's why we need more than a two-minute flash in the pan here to debate this.

I want to hear from folks from the Atlanta Centers for Disease Control, and I want to determine whether they are still opposed to breed-specific banning, and why. I

want to hear from the Canada Safety Council. I want them to tell us not only their data and evidence but also the expertise upon which they base their conclusion that breed-specific bans don't work. I want to have folks from the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. I want to have people from the Toronto Humane Society. And while you're talking about the Toronto Humane Society, you might as well call in the folks from down in Niagara. Like Mr Hudak will tell when you he speaks to this bill for an hour, the Welland humane society, along with so many others, with its incredible wealth of experience dealing with good dogs and bad dogs, stray dogs and trained dogs, vicious dogs and mild dogs, says breed-specific bans don't work.

I know that somebody from the government is going trot out that old chestnut about Winnipeg. Of course the number of bites by pit bulls has decreased, because they eliminated pit bulls from Winnipeg. But the number of bites from other breeds, according to any number of sources, has increased.

Let me put this proposition to you, and it's what some of the research and data talk about: This year it happens to be pit bulls; if we reflect, not too long ago it was Rottweilers; before that, it was Dobermans; before that it was, who knows, perhaps German shepherds. I want to know exactly what the pit bull population is, I want to know how valid the dog bite statistics are and I want to know how carefully we collect that data, because I suspect we don't collect it very well. I suspect that most dog bites aren't reported, and I also suspect there was something of a spike in the pit bull population because it happens to be the breed of the month.

It's not a new breed. Get this: During World War I, pit bulls were used in the trenches by the military. Pit bulls were some of the heroes of that tragic war with its huge cost of life. The pit bull was the dog in that RCA Victrola ad; you know, "His Master's Voice," and the pit bull sitting there. Heck, Spanky and the gang—who were they? The Little Rascals: pit bull. Buster Brown shoes: pit bull.

As a matter of fact, the Staffordshire bull terrier, one of the breeds this government wants to simply ban, is known as the nanny dog. That's what it's colloquially known as, because of its effectiveness, gentleness and accommodation of children, according to this source. I'll be quite candid: It's an e-mail I received from Maureen Pyke. I'm going to give Hansard the names so they can make sure the spelling is correct.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Fine, I'm sure she did. Mr Ramal says she e-mailed everyone. Why shouldn't she? What's wrong with that? Is she not entitled to? Does it somehow diminish the impact of her e-mail that she e-mailed everyone? What's the matter with you? Please, Mr Ramal. Shame.

Ms Pyke e-mailed and said:

"I own two Staffordshire bull terriers affected by this legislation.

"The 'nanny dog' (as they are affectionately known around the world) is rare here in Canada (1,000 dogs in the entire country) but in Britain there are 250,000! One of Britain's most popular breeds, and where do they stand on the bite statistics? Four tenths of one per cent are committed by a Staffordshire bull terrier, not even in the top 100 breeds that bite."

**1920**

I don't know whether that's accurate or not. I have no reason to disbelieve Ms Pyke. I, quite frankly, suggest to the government that if Ms Pyke is wrong, and as one Liberal backbencher wants to point out with some scorn, she e-mailed this to everybody—I presume at least to him. I hope she did e-mail it to everybody. You see, this is a very serious consideration.

**Mr Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe):** On a point of order, Speaker: Just for the record, I mentioned that she e-mailed everyone not to go against her—

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order. The member for Niagara Centre may continue.

**Mr Kormos:** I'd suggest to Mr Ramal that he use his 20 minutes' speaking time and speak to the bill when his chance comes, because—

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Niagara Centre, could you please refer to them by their ridings?

**Mr Kormos:** My apologies; Mr Ramal, from London-Fanshawe. You're right; his folks, the people whom he represents, ought to know.

So there's Maureen Pyke with that observation about the nanny dog. I find it pretty troubling that somehow the government is going to have us believe that by eliminating this nanny dog, the Staffordshire bull terrier, which Ms Pyke says isn't even in the top 100 in Britain's stats, is going to solve vicious dog attacks. My concern is that Ms Pyke may well be right, and then we'll have done nothing to protect kids or other people from vicious dog attacks.

The Courtney Trempe jury recommendations: education, education, education—coming from veterinarians, schools, family physicians, paediatricians and Web sites—regarding responsible dog ownership, and that it be provided to people acquiring dogs from breeders and pet store owners.

"Recommend that all dog owners"—this is an interesting one; I don't know how people think about it—"be required to post a provincial standard sign indicating that a dog lives on the premises."

They recommended "that all dog acquirers be required to take a course in pet ownership and responsibility."

I had a dog—Charlie the beagle. I talked to you about him before. I took Charlie to a dog obedience school—this is a true story. Dogs are like their owners. He ended up getting thrown out of school too. It made me feel young again. They said, "That's it." Then, a friend of mine, Charlie Ryall, who breeds and trains retrievers out in Niagara Falls—some of you know him; the lawyer. Charlie had a fellow who worked for the Niagara Parks Commission who trained his retrievers, and he suggested that I take Charlie the beagle out to see this fellow, so I

did. I explained that Charlie got thrown out of dog obedience school. The guy said, "Breed?" I said, "Beagle." The guy said, "Does he bark?" I said, "Oh, yeah." The guy said, "He's trained. There's nothing more I can do for him."

Beagles are incredible dogs. Charlie never bit anybody, but if Charlie could sneak his way out, he'd pick up a scent and he'd be gone for hours and hours. It reached the point where—because the humane society would pick him up, and then I'd have to spend 50 bucks or something to bail him out, right?—people would call the humane society because Charlie would be sleeping on their front lawn, just exhausted after having travelled Lord knows how many miles to the other side of town. They'd call the humane society, and they'd say, "Oh, that's Charlie the beagle. Here's Kormos's phone number." The people would call me up and I'd say, "I'll be over to pick him up." They'd say, "Don't rush. He's so sweet."

Charlie is no longer with us. Charlie has gone on. I can't talk about Charlie without commending Joanne Bouchard, my neighbour, for taking such tremendous care of him. She took more care of him than I did, because I was up here, of course, right?

The Trempe jury recommendations: education. They then speak of legislative changes. That's particularly relevant to what's being discussed here.

"Recommend that the Dog Owners' Liability Act"—that's the legislation that this bill purports to amend—"be amended to allow for ex parte hearings in which the court may order that an owner of a dog take steps for more effective control of a dog or may order that a dog be destroyed."

They talk about allowing a judge "to order that a dog be confined or restrained by leash or muzzle when on the owner's property or in public..."; identify in the act "methods by which dogs may be restrained"—leashing, muzzling, dog enclosure; amendment to the act "to provide for an automatic restraint order for dogs that are ordered by a judge to be destroyed." Of course.

They recommend that fines be substantially increased. The government's going to say, "We did that." Well, yes; that's big.

Prohibition from ownership—it's in the act.

They recommended that the Dog Owners' Liability Act be amended to prohibit guard dogs and attack dogs being trained "other than for the purpose of ownership by police or a registered security agency and that they only be housed in totally secured areas or taken out in the hands of an authorized and certified person."

Interesting, isn't it? Because a dog that has been trained for security and attack is no longer necessarily, in my view—and again, let's hear from the experts—the proverbial family pet.

"Reporting, recording and research"—the jury had considerable concerns about the type of data that was available to anybody here in this country: that there be an updating and improving of current reporting procedures, a province-wide system of record-keeping; that muni-

icipalities keep records; a toll-free number accessible for all dog owners as a help line; licensing and registration of dogs to permit province-wide tracking; they recommended that the tagging and licensing of dogs be incorporated with rabies injections to produce a single dog tag—an interesting proposition.

You know what dog tags are for the municipality, don't you? It's not a way of regulating dogs; it's a way of generating revenue in conjunction with the SPCA, which is inevitably cash-strapped. They cut a deal in terms of the transfer payment from the municipality to the SPCA, which constantly has to go cap in hand to the city council begging for more money. They have to go out there doing bake sales, fundraising and raffles, when they're charged to do very demanding work in terms of animal control, including dangerous animal control. So dog tags are nothing about regulating dogs; of course not. They're about fundraising. Let's not kid ourselves.

The jury's recommendation was a more serious approach, a province-wide approach, to tagging and licensing of dogs and incorporating it with rabies injections. Interesting, especially for dogs that are in rural areas, semi-rural areas, whether it's down where I come from in Niagara or up north where Ms Martel comes from, where dogs, as potential victims of rabid animals like raccoons, among others, could then become carriers of rabies themselves.

Recommendation number 28: "Recommend that the provincial government develop a protocol which requires that a dog involved in a serious biting incident be given behavioural and physical testing by qualified individuals, prior to being euthanized, in order to improve our knowledge of why such incidents take place."

Recommendations regarding breeders, trainers and animal shelters: "... certification process for breeders, trainers and behaviourists as a requirement for obtaining a business licence.

"... examine ways to regulate the selling of dogs in pet stores in order to limit the sale of improperly bred dogs."

I talked about how it's my suspicion—and we really need the data to confirm or refute this—that pit bulls, as the dog of the month, if you will, have spiked in population. We also know from previous experience—and it's strange what will do it. Do you remember? You're so young, you were maybe not even born when Disney's 101 Dalmatians—remember that cartoon? A phenomenon like 101 Dalmatians produces an incredible demand for Dalmatians. So the breeders get into the act and start breeding dogs. You get some badly bred dogs because you've got a whole lot of inbreeding simply because of the demand to produce these dogs because kids see the cartoon and they're nagging. Quite frankly, it's happening—you've seen it with German shepherds in terms of hip problems that German shepherds have: the result of a whole lot of bad breeding because of the huge demand for German shepherds, some very irresponsible breeders responding to the market. We saw it with Dalmatians. Every time there's one of those Disney

things—it's that whole phenomenon of anthropomorphism, isn't it?

That's really no small or insignificant part of what this is all about. It's about not understanding that dogs, all dogs, have, not too far back in their genetic history, the status of undomesticated animals. I'm sorry to say that to folks. You know the little cockapoo sitting on the chesterfield, you know the little puppy? It wasn't too long ago in that animal's genetic history that it wasn't a domestic animal. People have to understand that when they're interacting with dogs and using dogs either as companions or as working dogs, be it farmers or any other number of people: guard dogs, watchdogs and so on. So my concern—and that's why this last recommendation is pretty profound, examining and putting more focus on dogs that do bite, and bad bites, to help understand why—is that there may be a whole lot, by this point, just as there were of shepherds, just as there were of Dobermans, I am told—it may well have been the phenomenon with Rottweilers, too, I don't know—is that some bad breeders have produced some bad pit bulls, but that pit bulls, in and of themselves, aren't bad.

Recommendations 29 to 32, regulation of the selling of dogs in pet stores: “Recommend that the Canadian Kennel Club require a behaviour component in all confirmation classes....

“Recommend that all animal shelters”—catch this one—“neuter or spay the dogs they release to the public for adoption.” Of course, they'd need the financial support from the province to do that, wouldn't they?

### 1930

If this government were really serious about addressing some of the issues out there, it would be funding humane societies and SPCAs, however they happen to be run in any given community, to effect the neutering or spaying of any animal that's taken in. That would include cats too, quite frankly. And why not?

Now that we're talking about money, understand that this legislation is downloaded on to municipalities. Down where I come from, as I've made reference, we've got a humane society that is constantly scrambling for financial support—constantly. I mean, heck, deal with the investigations into whether or not a puppy has a granddaddy that's a pit bull or a puppy that looks like a pit bull and maybe is just going to be snatched away from some little kid—that's a hyperbolic, emotional sort of thing to say and is probably totally irrelevant to the argument. Imagine some overzealous humane society officer snatching a puppy from a little kid's arms because it might be a pit bull.

Don't wrinkle your noses like that. That's about as valid as the Attorney General marching into the media studio saying, “Pit bulls: banned, gone.” Why doesn't the province get serious about the role of animal control and support humane societies and SPCAs with the money they need to spay or neuter every animal that's taken into their custody?

“Recommend that the province recognize the importance of dog bite prevention by providing adequate fund-

ing and other resources to address this problem in areas of education, enforcement”—enforcement, that's what I've been trying to tell you: the enforceability of this legislation alone and the incapacity, the lack of capacity by municipalities with their animal control officers. Look, there's a whole pile of municipalities across the province now that only have animal control officers five days a week, eight hours a day during daylight hours. Trust me. The reference was made by the Attorney General that the police will jump in and fill the gap. Horse feathers, once again. What baloney. Our cops are too darned stressed and understaffed now to deal with Criminal Code offences. We've got grow houses all over the province. We've got airplanes up there detecting them with thermal imaging kind of stuff, and the cops can't bust them because they haven't got the resources to shut down these grow houses and bust organized crime. All that does is give the Solicitor General cause for more futile, feckless press conferences. Talk about a ministry that's been spayed and neutered. All it can do is press conferences, instead of staffing police forces with cops out there to bust criminals.

“Recommendations to the federal government”—this one is critical: “Recommend that Health Canada create an agency to collect and analyze provincial information relating to dog bites and attacks.” There is a thorough paucity of data in this province and in this country about dog bites. Who is the victim of them and what dogs are the perpetrators of them? Unfortunately, the most frequent source of information is what happens to be on the front page of the newspaper on a particular occasion. I'm not satisfied at all that there is a disproportionate number of dog bites—even a disproportionate number of dog bites—by pit bulls compared to other dogs, especially when I read the references to federal studies contained in that CBC broadcast back in 2002, which lists the top four dog biters in this country, none of which are pit bulls.

So I commend to government members a perusal of the Courtney Trempe jury recommendations. Quite frankly, it's a lot more valuable reading than the fluff and puffery that accompanied the Attorney General's legislation, which is more about headlines than about protecting people from dangerous or vicious animals.

My staff told me I was getting e-mails from folks opposed to the pit bull ban, so I said to my staff down in Welland, “You make sure each one is acknowledged.” They didn't appreciate me telling them that. They said, “But you don't understand; there are 800 so far,” 800 individual e-mails. I've got to confess I haven't read them all. I haven't read them all, but I have determined that they're not form letters. Each one is a story in and of itself, and they range from just plain folks to dog breeders to animal enthusiasts.

What I'm going to do, because these people deserve to have their voices heard, and I've only got 21 minutes left—if I could have unanimous consent to do two hours, to have an additional hour, I'd dearly love to do a little more justice—

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** Peter, can I go through that pile?

**Mr Kormos:** Lalonde, haven't you got a junket to go on? There's a plane waiting somewhere for you. You leave me alone. I've got some reading to do.

I'm going read some of these into the record. May I have unanimous consent for an additional hour, please, Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member has asked for unanimous consent for an additional hour. I heard a no.

**Mr Kormos:** OK. I talked to you about Maureen Pyke. Here's Doreen Davies: "I am against any ban on specific animals." That's a short one.

Let's get down to Lynn and Randy:

"Subject: Pit bull ban.

"Dear Mr Kormos,

"I would first like to thank you for taking this stand, and here are my thoughts. The facts have not been presented. Mr Bryant has left out the ones that go against his arguments. Winnipeg has had a 600% increase in non-pit bull incidents since the pit bull ban has been in effect.... Just like guns are only a problem in the wrong hands, so is it for the pit bull.

"Randy Noel,

"Mount Albert, Ontario."

Here's one from Mario Amaral: "I am e-mailing you because of this ridiculous pit bull ban that the Hon Michael Bryant is trying to pass. As you are well aware, there are many flaws in Mr Bryant's argument, as well as misinformation. He has stated that he has met with organizations on both sides of the argument. However, it has been widely publicized that this is inaccurate, to say the least."

Yes, I suspect that the Canadian Kennel Club, the Ontario veterinary association, the OSPCA and a whole lot of groups would have things to say about this once this comes to committee hearings, because my understanding—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Well, parade them out. Let's hear from them. My understanding is that these people weren't consulted in anticipation of the bill. Indeed, the bill dramatically demonstrates that, because there's nothing in the bill that is supported or advocated by any of the best possible evidence.

Here's an e-mail from Maureen Catlow, Windsor, Ontario:

"Dear Sir,

"I believe we should have a very strict dangerous dog bylaw, that owners should be held seriously accountable for the behaviour of their dogs, and that high fines and prison time are quite appropriate for those who do not intend to obey the law.

"The law is useless without enforcement.... A breed ban is such an unfair solution, when all are punished for the actions of a few."

Here's one from Marjorie Healey: "I would like to give my opinion on the proposed ban. The US has been trying to stop people who breed for and hold dog fights

for many years. These dog fight people are the type of people that should be targeted. Any dog will bite if it is taught to do so, and the irresponsible owners should be held accountable, not a specific breed."

Marcia Murray-Stoof: "I have never owned a pit bull but do believe that any breed of dog's temperament is a result of raising and ownership, not genes.

"There are numerous animal agencies that agree banning is not a solution....

"Personally, of all dog bites and attacks I have seen, never has it been a pit bull. I have witnessed a Yorkshire terrier attack a two-year-old, a Dalmatian a 12-year-old, a German shepherd attack children and adults on several occasions, a corgi his owner"—as a matter of fact, I think Her Majesty, or at least some of her family, have had trouble from time to time with corgis—"and a golden Lab his owner.

"I have known three families with pit bulls, and they have never had a problem of any sort with aggression.

"Banning is not the solution. It is avoidance of dealing with the real issues of dog attacks, and that is the dogs' owners."

**1940**

Maureen Jennings, Toronto, Ontario: "I think for Ontario to introduce this legislation is very foolish. There is absolutely no evidence that breed-specific legislation is effective in preventing unprovoked dog attacks"—and it goes on.

Linda McIntyre, Aylmer, Ontario: "I am writing in regards to proposed breed-specific legislation the Liberal government wants to impose."

*Interjections.*

**Mr Kormos:** You see, they're squealing. The porcine squealing coming from the government backbenchers is getting louder. If only they would let me have a second hour, I could read more of these with the names of the authors. They're the ones who denied me the unanimous consent. So cut out the porcine squealing, or else I'll bring in a private member's bill to ban porcine squealing in the Legislature.

"Dear Mr Kormos,

"I am writing in regards to proposed breed-specific legislation the Liberal government wants to impose. While I firmly believe that tougher legislation is long overdue, I do not believe banning certain breeds is the answer. As Mr Bryant is using Winnipeg as a role model, you only have to look at their statistics. Bites are up. He has never mentioned Calgary. They have incredible bylaws: zero tolerance for all breeds."

Here's a lengthy e-mail. My goodness, she sent this to all Liberal MPPs. I hope no Liberal backbencher stands up and somehow diminishes the impact of it because she dared. Lori Gray, from Alliston, Ontario, had the audacity, as a member of this provincial community, to send this to all the Liberals. That gets the Liberals riled up. You saw that just 30 minutes ago. We had a Liberal riled up, standing up on a point of order, wanting to somehow suggest that a reference I made to an e-mail was not as valid as it could be because that e-mail had been sent to

everybody. Well, why aren't you standing up and reading them, Mr Ramal?

Lori Gray writes, "To Whom This May Concern." That means us.

"For 10 years now I have awakened to two wet noses"—hold on—"and attached to those noses are two American Staffordshire terriers named Pete and Tess.

"Pete I acquired five years ago, as he belonged to a local drug dealer who was busted by our OPP in this area. I am a friend of the attending sergeant of this detachment, who was the acting officer at the scene"—and on and on. It talks about the incredible relationship she's got with Pete and Tess.

But you see, I anticipate that some oh-so-clever, oh-so-sharp government members might stand up in two minutes and say, "Well, those are individual people with their own experiences. That's not science." That's exactly the point. It's not science. Nor can the victims who can be brought forward by the government, who have been tragically attacked by pit bulls, be used as an argument that banning pit bulls is the solution to vicious dog bites. That's the point. It's not science.

That's why we have got to hear from the scientists and examine the data as best as it can be acquired and presented. I put to you that the government is as loath as it is to deal with evidence that isn't anecdotal, to deal with evidence that's scientific, because the scientific evidence coming from the American Centers for Disease Control, from the Canada Safety Council, from the Ontario SPCA, from the National Companion Animal Coalition and from the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association is to the effect that breed-specific bans don't work.

E-mail: There's one from Michelle Cameron.

Here's one from Mike and Jean Dabros: "I would appreciate it very much if you could find the time to read my e-mail." I guess now, Mike and Jean Dabros, I've proven that I have. Here's "a copy of an e-mail my husband sent to our MPP, John Gerretsen, on Sunday that I am fairly certain he has not taken the time to read, since he has yet to respond to our invitation.

"I received a letter yesterday from the Premier, Dalton McGuinty, telling me how much he valued my views, yet as soon as I read the first paragraph, it was more than obvious that he had not taken the time to read my letter," and she goes on.

Mr Dabros, who's a lieutenant colonel, writes, "As my elected MPP who will vote on this law, do you know what a Staffordshire bull terrier is? Have you read the CKC breed standard for this dog that demands that they breed true to a temperament that is non-human-aggressive and in fact highlights a required fondness for children?" This goes back to what I told you: the nanny dog, a Staffordshire bull terrier.

"Do you know that people routinely erroneously identify mutt pit bulls as purebred Staffordshire bull terriers?"

There's another voice that has a right to be heard: Miroslaw Slonski, who also happens to be an engineer.

Miroslaw Slonski addresses me: "To begin, I must commend you for the position you have taken in the provincial Parliament to oppose backdoor legislation that the McGuinty government has been trying to fast-track without any public input....

"Once again, please accept my gratitude for ensuring that Ontarians have a say in this or any other...."

Brigitte and Monique Nagy, I suspect, are dog owners because they say, "On behalf of Rosir, Emmy, Marble, Pickles, Mandy, Puppy and numerous others who cannot speak for themselves"—I think those are the puppies. I just got a feeling; "Pickles" was the tipoff there.

"First and foremost, let me start off by saying that the sheer ignorance of so many so-called 'Homo sapiens' both deeply saddens and disgusts me in the extreme. During the 1980s, it was the Doberman, during the 1990s the Rottweiler and now it's the pit bull. Before a hysterical individual spouts off on this or any other subject, it should be mandatory for them to do some research. I recommend the 2003 study entitled, *Fatal Dog Attacks*, by Karen Delise." She goes on expressing thorough objection to this legislation and the proposition that a breed-specific ban is—

Here's one from Nancy Clements, Toronto, Ontario, who writes:

"Hello, Howard and Peter:

"I've said this to Marilyn Churley, my local MPP. However, Peter, since you commented on this bill today, I thought you might be interested in my message to Mr Bryant." She goes on, "Mr Bryant, I was saddened and disappointed to learn that you have introduced Bill 132 with very little public consultation other than with those who share your views."

Here's one that should be somewhat telling to the Liberal members. Selma Mulvey from Burford, Ontario, writes:

"Dear Mr Kormos:

"I have just watched Ontario Legislative Assembly proceedings.... I have written to Messrs Bryant and McGuinty, with no reply." Here are the last two notes to them.

Catch this one, addressed to me, "Thank you for speaking out on this issue and for showing common sense. It is a refreshing change from the hysterical performances of Mr Bryant on CBC." Catch that. If there's a member of the public who's saying that Kormos is being calm and reflective and you're being hysterical, put that in your pipes and smoke it, friends, because that is the most telling comment that was made in all of these 800 e-mails, I say to you right here and now.

Here's an e-mail from Steven Paraskevopoulos.

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** Paraske—what?

**Mr Kormos:** Don't make fun. It's a Greek name, Mr McMeekin. I appreciate he's not an Anglo-Saxon type, but Paraskevopoulos is a noble Greek name, as a matter of fact. I know a lot of people in the Paraskevopoulos family. It's a big family.

"Dear Mr Kormos:

"I am writing this note in hopes of preventing the further vilification of a breed that I have been associated with for over 15 years ... extending understanding of idiosyncrasies of the American pit bull terrier, as well as firm opinions as to why it has found itself in its current situation." He goes on to talk about his employment, establishing his credibility and background—but again, incredibly concerned.

Here's one from Penny DiClemente. She doesn't give an address but she's got a 416 number: "As an Ontario taxpayer and voter, I demand that the Liberal government scrap Bill 132 in favour of an Accountable Dog Owners Act, not breed bans."

Meaghan Edwards, Hamilton, Ontario: "I myself do not own a pit bull or related breed, but I know that breed-specific legislation is just a band-aid solution to a serious problem regarding dog attacks."

### 1950

Mary Jo Canonico is a 65-year-old grandmother with a 10-year-old rescued pit bull named Molly: "I have been attacked and bitten on three separate occasions, by a border collie, shepherd mix and an English setter. Each dog was unleashed and the owner could not control their dog.

"Enforce the laws already on the books. Stop backyard breeders.... Punish irresponsible dog owners, and not the breed. Where I live, 60% of dogs are off-leash."

Here's one from Paul Wilkinson: "I am writing to you to express my concern regarding Michael Bryant's proposed ban on pit bulls in Ontario.... I will, however, support legislation that would place responsibility with the dog owner, provided it does not affect any specific breed."

Liz Ruork of Toronto: "Please help us to fight this legislation, which will not solve the problem of dog-on-dog or dog-on-human aggression."

S.R. Shepherd, from London, Ontario: "I am not a lover of pit bulls. However, I am against Bill 132. I fear that this is a typical piece of legislation that ignores the real problem, which is up-to-date, enforceable legislation that deals with puppy mills, pet stores, cruelty and irresponsible pet owners."

Darren Trach sends an e-mail: "I am writing to you today to voice my concern about the proposed legislation banning pit bulls. I am a proud Staffordshire terrier owner." Isn't that the one they call the nanny dog over in Britain because it's good with kids? "I am not a criminal. I am a civic employee and volunteer my time with many community organizations and events."

Here's one from Deanna Maerz: "I am writing to express my concern over the ban of pit bull terriers. I'm deeply disturbed and strongly oppose Bill 132."

Sharon Aron, from Ottawa, Ontario: "I am writing to express my concern with Bill 132."

Stephanie Ferguson: "I would like to take the time to say thank you.... You have opened the eyes of other politicians and the public to the skewed facts that the Attorney General has been citing, and the holes in his legislation."

Here's Terri-Lee Kelly: "It is a sad day in Ontario when our democratic way takes a back seat to grandstanding. Michael Bryant should be ashamed of himself."

Jean Radley includes a 416 telephone number, no address: "I strongly oppose the ban as well. I think that the media has caused hysteria and made people crazy."

Connie Brown of Peterborough: "Michael Bryant is attempting to legislate a ban on pit bulls.... To me, it would make more sense to legislate mandatory spay/neuter of dogs over six months of age unless they are part of a registered breeding kennel...." This is valuable stuff. This is more consistent with the Courtney Trempe jury recommendations than with this lopsided and, quite frankly, insincere attempt by the government to create a lot of flash and spin. She's talking about mandatory spaying/neutering "of all dogs over six months of age unless they are part of a registered breeding kennel where the breeder belongs to a national breed club and/or national kennel club." That's a fascinating observation.

Judy Karam in Thunder Bay: "Though it feels like our provincial government has bamboozled its unknowing constituents ... this ignorant piece of legislation does need to be stopped."

Kathleen Pollock, Belleville, Ontario: "I am very opposed to Bill 132."

Sharon Robertson: "I am appalled that our government is trying ram through breed banning legislation."

Kerstin Stafford, Ottawa, Ontario: "As a responsible large dog owner, I can state for a fact that you cannot ban breeds with any success. All dogs bite."

Melvin and Joan Beech: "On behalf of dedicated dog breeders in Ontario, please consider that the ban on pit bulls is unfair. It includes legitimate breeds of dogs, ie, American Staffordshire, Staffordshire, American pit bull etc. This legislation has the same value as the federal gun registry and is akin to banning butter knives along with AK-47s." Interesting.

Nelson Ross. I'm sorry, folks, we're running out of time: Nelson Ross; Ryan Byrd, Parkdale-High Park; Sarah Boileau; Sheri Heckler; Nichola Burgess; Laura S. Fleming, Toronto; Ken Hernden, North Bay; Kevin Nibbs, Kanata; Kerri Losier from St Catharines. Oh, look. I haven't read this before:

"Dear Mr Kormos,

"As a constituent of your riding who voted for you"—thank you very much, Kerri—"and my mother helped campaign for you, I am asking for your help in regards to Bill 132.

"I agree with a small portion of the bill as it is tabled as of the first reading. However, I urge you not to allow this bill to pass in the way it is written.

"I agree that there needs to be more of an onus on owners of any dog, but I do not believe in the banning of a breed."

This is as reasoned an observation as any Ontarian could make. She understands that there has to be something done about vicious and dangerous dogs, but she,

like the experts, says you don't achieve that by banning breeds.

So I say to you, New Democrats insist that this bill receive thorough, lengthy and complete public hearing consideration across this province. There has to be an opportunity for Ontarians from every part of Ontario, urban and rural, north and south, east and west, to address this bill, and there has to be thorough consideration of the expert evidence that will be available to us during the course of those same public committee hearings.

**The Acting Speaker:** Just before we begin questions and comments, I would remind all members that anyone who wishes to comment, heckle, howl or bark must do so from their seat in order that Hansard can correctly identify the member.

**Mr Zimmer:** We've heard a lot of talk from the member from Niagara Centre, an hour of talk, but here are the facts, six simple facts.

Fact number one: Pit bulls are qualitatively different from any other breed.

Fact number two: If you keep an eye on the press and the media, you read day after day of the serious, tragic harm that pit bulls do to innocent citizens—men, women and children.

Fact number three: The legislation is reasonable. It's moderate. All we're saying to pit bull owners is, first, that you can no longer breed them, and second, you can't import them. If you do have a pit bull and you want to keep it, do three simple things: leash it, muzzle it, have it spayed or neutered. That's a small expense.

The fact is that there is huge public support for this legislation. All the major newspapers, all the mid-sized newspapers, all the small-town newspapers offer editorial support for this legislation. Municipal politicians across the board—mayors, councillors—from the large cities, the mid-sized cities and the rural communities, support this legislation. Ontario's police officers support this legislation.

Finally, we've heard a lot from the member from Niagara Centre and others that somehow this government has been negligent in its obligation to consult. This government has consulted extensively with all the parties, all the stakeholders that are interested in this legislation.

The fact of the matter is, it's reasonable legislation and it's moderate legislation.

**2000**

**Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I hope to have a chance to speak to this bill in greater detail. Like my colleague from Niagara Centre, I have extensive e-mails coming in from across the province of Ontario from people opposing this ill-considered legislation that is nothing but a publicity tool for the Attorney General. There's no doubt he was effective, when he was sitting back here, getting in the media once in a while. He had some good photo ops. I think this is more about trying to get the Attorney General back on the television screens and the newspapers than bringing forward responsible legislation.

**Mr Dunlop:** Bumper-sticker politics.

**Mr Hudak:** Bumper-sticker politics, my colleague says. It is very true.

Elizabeth Lind writes in with a number of reasons why this pit bull ban should be abandoned and dangerous dog legislation in general should be strengthened. Here's another one from Amanda from Niagara Falls, Ontario, unfortunately reflecting the same thing the member for Niagara Centre pointed out. She has written to the Attorney General, and the response? Nothing, nada, zip, goose egg. She says we should put better laws in place to address cruelty, abuse, neglect, backyard breeding and irresponsible owners, as opposed to ending the lives of this particular breed of dogs.

The St Catharines and District Kennel and Obedience Club sent a letter to Minister Bryant as well, saying the board of directors and members of the St Catharines and District Kennel and Obedience Club strongly oppose legislation directed at banning specific bull breeds: "We believe a dangerous dog is a product of many factors, not breed alone. They should be dealt with individually as opposed to banning breeds."

I know my colleague talked about support for the legislation. We wonder if there is some. We've come across a curious e-mail to a number of people, including Liberal ministers' staffers, saying, "Take a minute and sign this on-line petition to support the minister's ban." Do you know who it's sent by? Tom Allison, the senior adviser to the Attorney General—somebody in the minister's office trying to generate publicity for this. This is pathetic.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Let me say a couple of things in response to what my colleague Mr Kormos has said.

First of all, there's no doubt in my mind that this legislation really does need to go to committee so we can have a full airing of all of the concerns and, secondly, so the committee can actually call on legislative research to provide the necessary statistical information that would support or not support what the government wants to do.

I saw some of Mr Bryant's comments, not on Studio 2, a couple of weeks ago—I'll read them into the record later—and I really wondered where he got his information from. I think it is imperative that people who have a concern on both sides of this issue have a forum where they can come and have their say.

The other reason that I think it's important to have full public hearings is because, despite what I have heard some Liberals say, the fact of the matter is there are some reasonable, legitimate and credible groups that are opposed to what you're trying to do, who argue very strongly that if you want to get at public safety, if that is the number one goal that the government is trying to achieve, then you're not going to get that through banning a specific breed. You will get it dealing with dangerous dog legislation. Let me just deal with some of those groups.

The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals strongly believes that any breed-specific ban

would not be an effective solution. Then they go on to make at least eight points about what could be in a strategy for dangerous dogs.

Secondly, we've got the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, a group of professionals who deal with animals every day and who could probably give us some very interesting information.

We've got the Canada Safety Council, which says very clearly that breed bans should not be used as a quick fix, and the solution lies in effective animal control measures. They go on.

These are the kinds of people who need to come and have their say so we can have an intelligent discussion about this legislation.

**Mr John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** It's a pleasure to comment on the comments made by the member from Niagara Centre.

I just want to say that tonight's debate reminds me a bit of some of the debates that have gone on in communities over smoking bans, where municipal councils heard that if they enacted a smoking ban the sky would fall, restaurants would close, bars would go under. Three or four years later, you find in the community practically 100% support for it. That has been the experience in my community.

I'm very proud tonight, if only for two minutes, to talk about the experience in Kitchener Centre, in the city of Kitchener, where, several years ago, there were 18 pit bull attacks a year. The city council came forward with a series of recommendations that resulted in a pit bull ban in my community, one which I understand has been used as a model for the legislation that has gone forward.

At the time, we heard again that the sky was going to fall; we heard all the same sorts of arguments that have been put forward by the opposition tonight. What do you find several years later? I just spent the last constituency week, of course, in my riding, meeting with people, and what you find is that people in the city of Kitchener are saying, "What's the fuss? We enacted this several years ago; there were 18 attacks a year. Now there is only about one attack a year." When you look at the efforts of individuals like Berry Vrbancovic, one of our leading councillors, when you look at our mayor, Carl Zehr, what you see is forward-looking people who put up with the arguments that were put forward by the opposition, who did the right thing and brought forward the type of measures which we want to do province-wide.

I close by quoting Carl Zehr, the mayor of the city of Kitchener: "Every Ontarian in every city across Ontario deserves the same level of safety that we have in Kitchener." That's what this legislation would do. It has been a success in Kitchener, and it will be a success in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member has two minutes to wrap up.

**Mr Kormos:** I appreciate the stories about banning tobacco, and I appreciate again the anecdotal observations of any number of people, but let's take a look at the evidence. The Canadian Veterinary Journal, August

1996, long before this bill was drafted—it's a consideration of the research and it questions whether breed-specific legislation will reduce dog bites: "Children under the age of five faced the greatest risk of being bitten by a dog, and medium and large breeds, including German shepherds, shepherd mixes and Rottweilers were the breeds most frequently identified as the biting dogs." It goes on to talk about breed-specific legislation: "No one will argue that some pit bulls have been known to inflict serious injuries.... However, such actions," that is, responses, "should be taken against any dangerous dog, regardless of breed.

"Breed-specific legislation has three ... weaknesses." It goes on that under-inclusiveness is among them.

"A report in the May 1990 edition of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association [states that] ... during 1989, 164 out of 165 municipalities in the US considered breed-specific legislation but passed generic dog legislation instead." If we want to prevent all bites, there is only one sure way, and that is to ban all dogs.

The end of the line is: The American Centers for Disease Control says no to breed-specific banning, the American Veterinary Medical Association says no, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals says no, the Ontario Medical Veterinary Association says no, the Canada Safety Council says no—not because they're somehow going to the wall for a vicious breed of dog, but because they say that's not the solution. Now, is the government calling these people wackos, crackpots, irrelevant, somehow unlearned? The government surely didn't consult them in the preparation of this legislation. I say, let's have committee hearings, let's air this once and for all, get the evidence on the table.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Ramal:** Thank you Mr Speaker—

**Mr Kormos:** Twenty minutes, Khalil. Twenty minutes.

**Mr Ramal:** I'll try my best, my friend.

I'm always honoured and privileged to stand up in this House to speak about various issues and different bills. Today we are debating Bill 132. This regulation states that every—I know it's going to have many speakers in this House. I listened to speaker from Niagara Centre—

**Mr Kormos:** You interrupted me persistently.

**Mr Ramal:** No, I was just—anyway, in this regulation, every existing pit bull would have to be leashed or muzzled when in public. The pit bull would also have to be neutered or spayed and municipalities would be able to prescribe additional requirements in their town bylaws to reflect their citizens' concerns.

As I mentioned, I listened carefully to the member from Niagara Centre when he was speaking about different issues, but I couldn't know exactly whether his position finally was with tough regulation in order to protect the people of this province. I didn't hear that. In general, he's against banning one breed, the pit bull.

When he mentioned the e-mail that everybody in the House received from Ms Pyke, I didn't mean to undermine her e-mail. I was mentioning that every one of us

got a lot, several e-mails for and against the pit bull. That's why this issue is a concern not just for us in this House but for all the people across the province. Some people take the position to support, to continue with the banning of pit bulls, and some people are against it.

**2010**

I was reading a couple of different e-mails and I was surprised. The majority of the e-mails I received happened to be from the United States. A few of them were from Ontario. To be honest, with my constituents of London-Fanshawe, when I held a town hall meeting with my federal counterpart, Pat O'Brien, to listen to the people of London-Fanshawe's concerns, only two people asked questions about pit bulls. I told them that I would, with full respect and honesty, reflect and send their message to the people who are in charge of this division in this area. Of course, they were against banning the pit bull breed.

On the other side, a lot of people came to my office and told me that they support the ban on pit bulls because they believe it's dangerous to the safety of people. And that's why the Attorney General came with a proposal, in a bill, to ban the pit bull. Also, with respect to all the people in the province, we're open to debate, to listen to all sides of the House on what's the best measure to take, the best way to ensure the safety of all the people in this province. We went further, by going to committee to listen to more stakeholders, for more people to have input on which way we have to take in order to make sure that we have a safe society, a safe environment.

As the honourable member for Willowdale mentioned a few seconds ago when he stood up and spoke about supporting the bill, we're not asking much. We are asking, in conjunction with the city, for so many rules and regulations to be enforced. If you have a pit bull and you walk in the park, you have to leash or muzzle it. When you take it in public, on the street, downtown, in public places, it has to be leashed and muzzled, because a lot of kids are walking around, a lot of elderly ladies and men are walking around, a lot of innocent people are walking around. It's happened to me. Many pit bulls attack, damage and hurt many people in our province.

I listened to many people, and sadly, the other side of the House, regardless of whatever we do, has to go against it, especially the member for Niagara Centre. Regardless of what we say, he's going to take the other side. I was surprised when the lady sent him e-mails and described him as a common sense man. I was surprised, honestly.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Ramal:** I guess being around you I'm going to be surprised a lot, listening to a lot of stories coming from you or from other people.

In the end, I'm looking forward to engaging in many debates about this issue. I have full confidence in our Attorney General and our government to take the right decision in order to ensure the safety of every person in this province. We also believe that we are going to take all measures, all avenues, to engage all the people, not

just in this House, but every person in this province, in order to create a measure, a bill, to ensure the safety of all people in this province. I respect, as I said, the government and the Attorney General in the way he's going to see—it's important to achieve the goal, which is the safety of people first.

**The Acting Speaker:** It's time for questions and comments.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's my pleasure, because I too have heard from my riding on this issue, and repeatedly. Not to repeat the member from Niagara Falls, Mr Kormos made an impassioned speech; it was a fairly long speech, but it was nonetheless impassioned.

He cited many of the things I've heard in my riding as well. In fact, I met on, I believe, Thursday, no, it was Friday, because Thursday was Remembrance Day, and we shall never forget. I guess the key is that all of them are concerned about the ability to identify breed-specific criteria. Some of the evidence indicates there are a number of breeds that owners need to be cautious about.

Most of the comments I hear are these: The legislation is ill-prepared and ill-thought-out, and technically for the owner it's a reverse-onus condition, as the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford mentioned relentlessly in his speech. I counted, and I think he mentioned it 10 times. This will be challenged in the Superior Court or the Supreme Court. The reverse-onus provision provides that the owner of the dog must prove, once the charge has been laid, that indeed their dog is not a pit bull, when in fact there is no breed-specific pit bull. It's my understanding that it's not a unique breed; it's somewhat of a hybrid, I guess.

I met with two constituents on Friday, both of whom are involved in dog grooming and are to some extent familiar with the breeding issues. They know, and they've said to me, that there are many breeds out there that are far more active or vicious than the pit bull.

So this legislation, at the very least, needs to go for public hearings. The very general statement would be that it's ill-conceived, that it's mainly a media response to a very important safety issue to the public.

**Mr Kormos:** Ms Martel is going to be speaking to this bill shortly. Look, this is about banning dogs, not just muzzling them. This is about eliminating breeds of dogs. It's about eliminating and banning pit bulls, Staffordshire bull terriers, American Staffordshire terriers, American pit bull terriers and any dog that may look like one or that somebody may believe looks like one.

I asked one of our staff to access one of these standardized Web sites where they profile various dog breeds so that people looking to buy a dog can anticipate what kind of dog they should get. She pulled the description for American Staffordshire terrier: "Happy, outgoing, stable and confident dog; gentle and loving towards people; good-natured, amusing, extremely loyal and affectionate family pet; good with children and adults; almost always obedient; friendly, trustworthy dog who is an especially good dog for children." That's the

American Staffordshire terrier—especially good for children. That’s the dog the government wants to ban.

Here’s the Chihuahua: “Strong-willed; very attached to their owners”—a Chihuahua—“even to the point of jealousy; suspicious of people, except for its owner; difficult to train; the breed may snap at teasing children; it is not recommended for children; be sure to socialize your Chihuahua as a pup to avoid excessive aggressiveness with other dogs; as well as reserved, they tend to be fairly dog-aggressive.”

Now what is going on here? This is the problem when you start talking about these breeds and breed-specific banning and breed profiles. American Staffordshire terrier: good with kids—ban it. Chihuahua: snaps and takes bites at kids, keep it away from children—keep it alive and well in the province of Ontario. Good grief. This is how silly this particular proposition is. For the government members to be trained to be reading their scripts like the little seals they are, like the little lap dogs they are, saying, “Oh, this is just about muzzling pit bulls,” is bull feathers of the highest degree. It is above any of them to buy into that type of incredible and disingenuous effort at rationalizing their position.

2020

**Mrs Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** There have been a number of comments here tonight about the banning of pit bulls. I’m sure the public thinks this legislation is only about the banning of pit bulls. In fact, this legislation applies to all dangerous dogs and significantly strengthens the penalties and powers around any dangerous dog.

Before this legislation was tabled, I had someone in my office who was complaining about a particular case where there had been a dog attack in Guelph. It had been through the courts. The dog had been found to be vicious. This constituent said to me, “You know, Liz, under the law of Ontario as it is currently constituted, nobody has the authority to seize that dangerous dog.” This legislation fixes that so there is a power to seize any dog, regardless of breed, if it has been found to be dangerous.

While the member for Niagara Centre may be pooh-poohing this, let me tell you what the legislation actually says. The legislation says that there is the authority to seize a dog if the dog has on one or more occasions “bitten or attacked a person or domestic animal;” if the dog has on one or more occasions “behaved in a manner that poses a menace to the safety of persons or domestic animals;” if an owner of a dog has on one or more occasions failed to “exercise reasonable precautions to prevent the dog from,

“(i) biting or attacking a person or domestic animal, or

“(ii) behaving in a manner that poses a menace to the safety of persons or domestic animals.”

That language applies to all dangerous dogs.

**Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** Welcome to Dalton McGuinty’s Ontario. It’s an Ontario where this government will tell our children what they can eat. It is a government that is going to tell us what kind of dogs we

can own. It is the new, emerging Ontario of this Liberal government. It’s sad.

I have to say that to hear members of this government stand in their place and actually defend this bumper-sticker politics is disheartening. I would have expected more from the members opposite. I would have expected that members, at least of the backbench, would have stood in their place and said, “Yes, we clearly oppose dangerous dogs, and we will work with other members of the Legislature to ensure that this legislation is appropriately amended to deal with the real issue.” The real issue is dangerous dogs. Let’s all get together and ensure that’s what happens, but not this bumper-sticker politics that this Attorney General decided to get in front of the TV cameras with and become the poster child of the day by banning pit bulls. Contrary to what the previous speaker said, Mr Speaker, you know that that is what this is all about. It is about banning a specific breed that even the Attorney General can’t identify. Now, what is that all about?

What we have here is a piece of legislation that every member of the government should be ashamed of. I hope that, as we get this into committee, reason will prevail.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from London-Fanshawe has two minutes to summarize.

**Mr Ramal:** I would like to thank all the members who commented in the whole debate tonight. The member from Oak Ridges, when he was talking about the government only banning pit bulls, was not correct. We are banning all vicious dogs and are trying to regulate and put a law in place to protect people from all vicious dogs.

As a matter of fact, tomorrow night at 7 o’clock the city of London is holding a meeting for all the people of London to come and give their input to try to find a regulation to deal with vicious dogs. Everybody is welcome, if you want to go and see. It is very important. I think the Attorney General, by introducing this bill, creates some dialogue in this province in order to put this issue on the table and deal with it.

For a long time we have not been dealing with this issue face to face. I believe, whether we ban one breed or try to create more regulations, it is very important to open the dialogue and continue doing it to create safety for all of the people in this province.

I am listening tonight to a lot of debate. I haven’t made a decision yet as to whether I will go against or with this bill.

**Mr Dunlop:** You’re going to go with it. Don’t kid yourself.

**Mr Ramal:** Well, I believe we have no direction from our government to go with or against. We are listening here. We are creating our own directions. That’s why we’re engaging in this debate, to listen to you and to listen to others. Also, we read all the e-mails we receive from people. But we make a decision after all this discussion with and listening to the people of our ridings and the people of this province.

So I believe, in the end, our government is going to take the right direction in order to ensure the safety of

every person in this province, whether banning or creating some more tough regulations for the people who own pit bulls or vicious dogs or others.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Dunlop:** It's a pleasure to rise this evening and speak on Bill 132. To begin with, I can't imagine, with as many government members as there are in the House tonight, why you only spoke on your first rotation for seven minutes.

**Mr Tascona:** Six.

**Mr Dunlop:** Six minutes. It's disappointing, if we're trying to have debate in this House, that the government tries to control debate by not allowing their members to speak to it. If it's so important to the members, so important to the people in London-Fanshawe and to the people around Ontario, I would think they'd want to speak for 20 minutes and do a complete rotation. We're prepared to speak. The NDP are prepared to speak. It's disappointing when we sit here and they speak for seven minutes when they have an opportunity to speak for 20 minutes.

Bill 132 is An Act to amend the Dog Owners' Liability Act to increase public safety in relation to dogs, including pit bulls, and to make related amendments to the Animals for Research Act. As I said in one of my two-minute hits a little bit earlier, I won't be supporting this bill in its present form, unlike the member from London-Fanshawe, who has not quite made up his mind whether he'll support the bill or not. But if the Attorney General is not prepared to give the member from London-Fanshawe a briefing, I can arrange for the critic for the Attorney General's position, Mr Tascona, to do it. He knows the bill inside out. I think if you listen to Mr Tascona, you'll be able to find out what the bill is about. It actually does ban pit bulls; it's not just about muzzling. So let's get that clear to begin with.

Our offices have been inundated with a number of e-mails from people across the province opposed to this legislation. If you talk to the average person on the street and they've heard something in the media about it, they'll say, "Yes, I'm against those pit bulls." If you've seen one picture of a child who has been bitten and had a severe bite or someone who has been severely injured or killed, obviously anyone would want to know that the government has a responsibility to do something, and I agree with something being done. There's nothing wrong. But remember, in my opinion, it's not a dog problem; it's a people problem. It's a person problem, and that's where the difference is right here. We're actually banning dogs in this particular case.

But the main fault that can be found in Bill 132 lies in the definition of "pit bull." While the four specific breeds that are listed provide a reasonable starting point, it will become very difficult to identify crossbreeds or other breeds that fall under clause (e) of the definition and those dogs that share a similar physical appearance to pit bulls.

My understanding is that the Attorney General was actually on CP24 the other night and couldn't identify a

pit bull. I just can't believe that. He didn't know what a pit bull looked like, and he had this legislation out. Come on. If you're the person who's going to ban these animals, don't you think you should at least know what they look like? If you're going to ban heifers or pigs or German shepherds, I think you should know what they look like. The Attorney General couldn't identify one. So I brought a picture along tonight, and I'll mark for the Attorney General—I'll stick it on his desk before I leave—what a pit bull actually looks like. I've got a picture here with golden Labs—you name it; they're all on here. And there is a pit bull; no question about it. There is one on here, and I will mark it for the Attorney General so that he'll know when he actually sees one on the street, or when he goes to a dog pound he'll know what a pit bull actually looks like.

There have been a lot of e-mails, and I've got to put a lot of these responses on the record in this House. I think it's important that some of these people be heard. I think it's important that this debate we're talking about here tonight—I've heard Mr Tascona, the critic for the Attorney General's position talk about three weeks of hearings. I have to agree with that, and I think all the members in this House will agree with that as well. If we're having thousands and thousands of e-mails, if we're getting responses from all over the province, I think it's only fair that we get a number of days of committee hearings, not just here in Toronto but let's go to Kitchener and find out all the pros and cons about Kitchener-Waterloo. Let's go to London, Windsor, North Bay, Thunder Bay and just see what people are actually saying in those communities about this legislation.

#### 2030

We have to get to the details. We have to make sure that it's not just something people have seen on a TV screen or read in the Toronto Star or the Globe and Mail in an editorial. We have to make sure that they understand exactly what this means. That's what I think is important for the citizens here in Ontario.

The other thing is, I'd like the Attorney General or someone from the government to actually clearly identify all the special interest groups and stakeholders who agree with this legislation. Listening to the Attorney General, he would make it sound as though all these stakeholder organizations were in support of this legislation. I don't know who they really are. I thought he said the chiefs of police support it. My understanding is that there is no official position from the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police on this legislation. I'd like to know what organizations will be policing the legislation and enforcing it. I'd like to know.

**Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** Chief Fantino.

**Mr Dunlop:** I just heard someone yell, "Chief Fantino," from the back. Possibly Mr Fantino agrees with the legislation, but he doesn't represent all the chiefs of police. He represents one chief. He's the chief of police for one municipality. Of course, you're doing everything you can to get him out of there.

That's what I want: It should be understood in this House from the Attorney General what organizations actually support this legislation, and we haven't seen that yet. We certainly haven't seen it to this point. But there are a few people who don't agree with Mr Bryant, and I'd like to read from some of them.

I think the member from Niagara Centre did a great job earlier. He read a few e-mails. I'm going to add a lot more, and I know that many members on this side of the House would like this debate to go on for weeks, because they see a lot of reasons for making sure that we go ahead and get full debate and full committee hearings.

Here's a nice letter:

"Dear Mr Bryant,

"I just wanted to personally thank you for looking so ignorant and uninformed on CityTV last night. Until that point, I was heartbroken and convinced that the pit bull legislation would be passed. But after watching and listening to you make a fool of yourself, I now have renewed hope that after watching you in action on this topic, the remaining members of Parliament will do some homework rather than rely on the"—well, I won't say what that is, but it's a four-letter word and it sounds like fries—"that you have told them.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Dunlop:** OK, it sounds like fries.

"It was wonderful watching you squirm when confronted about your"—and again, it's that same four-letter word that sounds like "French fries"—"regarding Winnipeg and Kitchener. I truly loved your defence"—this is great; it's unbelievable—"Well, the animal control officer who we spoke with in Winnipeg..."

That was an absolute classic. The fact that your opposition, meaning every expert in this field, actually uses real statistics and that you rely on one animal control officer's opinion says a lot about this legislation and about the job you are doing in general.

"Can you find the pit bull, Mr Bryant?" That was another classic. Keep it up, please. I think I've already told you that I found the pit bull in the picture for him, and I will send that over to the Attorney General so he'll know in the future what a pit bull terrier actually looks like. That would be nice, providing he's passing this legislation.

"Again, thank you, Mr Bryant, for not doing any meaningful and quantifiable research on this topic, and thank you for not even knowing what a pit bull looks like, let alone the true nature of this wonderful breed. It certainly helps those who are truly knowledgeable on this topic fight your insane proposal."

That's not signed by my riding association president; it's signed by someone I've never heard of in my life. The gentleman's name is Mr Darren McKay.

That's a standard e-mail that's coming in. That's what we're getting day in and day out here. Here's the pile I've got. I can read through them all if you want. Mr Kormos has another 800 or 900 from different individuals.

I think the bottom line here is that they have to listen to these people. They're citizens of the province of Ontario. This isn't somebody from the Far East or England or Europe or something. These are people in North America, in Toronto and Ontario and Quebec—you name it.

But there are some other comments I want to add here too, because there is a lot to add. This is a distribution:

"Liberals Proposing Ineffective Legislation That Will Cost Municipalities Millions of Dollars. Liberals are manipulating facts and public trust.

"In an effort to deflect Ontarians' focus from rising taxes and broken election promises, Attorney General Michael Bryant and the McGuinty Liberals have launched a sensationalized campaign to ban pit bulls that is undemocratic, will cost municipalities millions of dollars to enforce and will not solve the dangerous dog situation in Ontario.

"Breed-specific legislation stomps on the rights of Ontarians under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

*Interjection.*

**Mr Dunlop:** I hear someone talking about John Tory. I got an e-mail the other day about Dalton McGuinty's family actually having a pit bull terrier named Tory McGuinty. Dalton McGuinty's family had a dog named Tory McGuinty.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Dunlop:** Well, I hear you talking about John Tory over here. I just thought I'd add the fact that Dalton McGuinty's family had a dog named Tory McGuinty and he's a pit bull terrier. Obviously, he likes pit bull terriers and he likes Tories. Search that out, because it's a fact. It is a fact: Tory McGuinty. He signed, actually put his paws on, a petition.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Dunlop:** Mr Speaker, could we get some quiet in here? I can't speak very clearly with all this noise around me.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Dunlop:** Another quote here: "Up to this point in time, Mr Bryant has made a deliberate choice to consult with individuals and organizations that support his biased agenda. He has presented incorrect and sensational information to the media and public," said Julie King, political action chair of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club of Canada. "He has excluded important stakeholders from the democratic process, including the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, and has not allowed open public hearings."

"There is no statistical data that supports that Ontarians want pit bulls banned. The government of Ontario has not commissioned a survey that supports their claim that a majority of Ontarians want breed-specific legislation, nor have they held a referendum to vote on the matter. A tally of feedback in the Toronto Star's Speak Out forum shows that 70% of voters oppose the proposed ban."

It goes on to say, "According to a recent poll taken by Citytv on October 15, 54% of participating Ontarians disapprove of the pit bull ban. Additionally, approximately 5,500 people have signed the Toronto Humane Society's petition to stop the pit bull ban. This is 1,500 more people than Mr Bryant required to table the proposed pit bull legislation."

"Crippling Economic Costs of Breed-Specific Legislation"—that's the next topic. "The McGuinty Liberals have not thoroughly investigated the crippling economic cost of breed-specific legislation. Fines levied will not pay to enforce the legislation. Municipalities across Ontario will have to find alternative means to pay for this legislation."

"Based on cost estimates for Prince George, Maryland, Ontario's municipalities should expect the new legislation to cost millions. In Prince George, population 800,000, expenses after revenues were deducted were \$524,509 for 2001-02. With a population of 12 million, the cost in Ontario would equate to \$7.8 million. Given the rural nature of many of Ontario's communities, it is reasonable to assume that the cost would be higher still. This is a burden that municipalities cannot afford under the current tax structure."

What's interesting about the \$7.8 million is that it's a third of the amount of money Dalton McGuinty has promised to add 1,000 new police officers in the province. He's promised \$30 million over the next three years when in fact it's going to cost \$200 million. So most of the police officers we will be hiring, when we pass this legislation, will be out looking for pit bulls.

Another quote I wanted to add: "One cannot help but draw parallels to the federal Liberals' gun registry legislation." Now, I don't want to get too far into this, because Mr Kormos has already covered this. "The initial estimate for the cost of that program was \$2 million. To date, the gun registry has cost Canadian taxpayers over \$2 billion dollars and the costs continue to rise," said Julie King."

#### 2040

"Breed-specific Legislation a Band-aid Solution."

"Breed-specific legislation does not stop dangerous dog bites. In the four years immediately following the pit bull ban in Winnipeg, pit bull bites dropped to one or two incidents per year but the overall number of dog bites increased." They increased. "This also happened in England after breed-specific legislation was introduced."

"The Ontario Veterinary Medical Association does not advocate legislation naming specific breeds of dogs as vicious. The OVMA encourages and supports reasonable genetic selection, rearing and training of dogs to control aggression. The Toronto Humane Society also believes that breed bans are not the answer to dog bites and aggressive behaviour. Additionally, the National Companion Animal Coalition, which counts among its members the Canadian Ministry of Agriculture, has published a statement presenting a similarly dim view of breed-specific bans."

They go on to say, "As long as irresponsible breeders and owners encourage hostile activity, the problem will not be resolved. If pit bulls are banned, the wrong people will simply train dogs of another breed to be aggressive. The problem of dog attacks and dangerous dogs is best dealt with through a comprehensive program of education, training and legislation encouraging responsible ownership of all breeds," said Julie King, the political action chair of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club of Canada."

The Bryant statistics are actually distorted: "Attorney General Michael Bryant and the McGuinty Liberals' proposed breed-specific legislation is fundamentally dishonest because it is based on fear, popular prejudice and inaccurate, obscure statistics."

"On October 15, Mr Bryant, quoting US statistics, stated, 'Pit bulls represent just 1% of the US dog population but they accounted for between 48% and 56% of serious dog attacks.' According to researchers at the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control, who have done the most work on dog bites, it is impossible to determine which breeds of dog are the most dangerous because no one knows how many dogs of each type there are. Official dog licence data can't be used because many dog owners don't register their dogs. Do pit bulls represent just 1% of the US dog population? The truth is, no one knows."

"On October 15, Mr Bryant was quoted as saying 'pit bulls account for between 48% and 56% of serious dog bites in the US.' According to Mr Bryant's staff, he got this statistic from an obscure Washington state publication called Animal People, which reported from its own non-statistically representative 'original investigative coverage' that of 59 vicious repeat offender dogs it found, 28 (48%) were pit bulls. A more accurate, scientific statistic is from the CDC, which reported in 1996 that out of 199 dog bite fatalities recorded in the US over a 17-year period, pit bulls accounted for 60, or a little less than 30% of the bites. The same data indicates that pit-bull-related fatalities have steadily declined over the past 15 years, while Rottweiler-related fatalities have steadily increased over the same period."

I could go on and on with the number of e-mails and letters we've got. But the bottom line is that we're talking about a number of people who have had severe bites and there's no question that the government has a responsibility to move forward with something. I simply believe it's an owner control issue and that owners have to be penalized.

But you know what? In Simcoe county and York region, we have 23,000 children right now who do not have the services that the rest of the province of Ontario has. They need a children's treatment centre in York region and Simcoe county. It would help 23,000 young people. I'm saying to the government, instead of worrying about pit bull terriers, let's deal with some priorities in this province. I'm asking for the people in Simcoe York and I'm asking—

**Hon James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** Where was that funding when you were in power?

**Mr Dunlop:** I just heard the comment. We approved the funding, and now it's been delayed. And do you know what? The finance minister's office will not return calls on this issue. He's an MPP from York region. He should be ashamed of himself, because it's his constituents who are suffering.

I want you to know that on November 22, next Monday morning, at 10:30 in my office in Orillia, we're having a rally to support these 23,000 young people who need these rehabilitation services. That's the type of priority the government should be dealing with. I don't know if you need to put a new football field in for the Argonauts. I think we should spend the \$8 million on the 23,000 young people who need these services in Simcoe county. That's the type of priority the government should be dealing with.

I know the intent was simple: The government wanted to divert attention from this disastrous budget, this disastrous health care tax, and they thought this would be a sexy way of doing it, with this pit bull terrier legislation. I don't think they ever thought there would be the kind of negative feedback there is.

I encourage the government—you are hearing a lot of comments here tonight. You will hear almost all of our colleagues in the official opposition and in the third party and I think you'll see that they will continue on. They'll want to do a lot of debate, but the key thing is the public hearings. My colleague the critic for the Attorney General and the minister responsible for native affairs has indicated that we need three weeks of public hearings. The House leader is here tonight, and I am sure he would agree with that, after hearing the comments.

With that, I'm going to close. I know that other people want to speak here tonight. There is probably still time for five Liberals to speak. We still have 45 minutes, so they can all put five minutes in. I thank you for this opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker:** It's time for questions and comments.

**Mr Kormos:** It's time for facts, instead of the typical Liberal fiction. Section 6 of the bill:

"Except as permitted by this act or the regulations, no person shall,

"(a) own a pit bull; ...

"(f) import a pit bull into Ontario."

What is a pit bull, according to the Liberals? Well, it is a pit bull, and nobody knows what is pit bull is, because it's not a formal, proper name of a dog. But it's also a Staffordshire bull terrier, an American Staffordshire terrier and an American pit bull terrier. Well, Staffordshire bull terriers are some of the most highly regarded dogs that have ever been bred. On this Wednesday, November 17, right here at Queen's Park at 12:30, the Super Dogs are coming to the south lawn for a press conference and to allow anybody who wants to, to meet some of Canada's premiere dogs, Super Dogs—some of

Canada's most titled Staffordshire bull terriers and Super Dogs. These Super Dogs, these Staffordshire bull terriers, make Rin Tin Tin look lame. These Super Dogs, these Staffordshire bull terriers, make Lassie look like a dog, compared to how they're going to impress you.

**Mr Tascona:** Lassie is a dog.

**Mr Kormos:** Lassie is a dog; quite right. Mr Tascona mentions that Lassie is a dog. That's very good, Mr Tascona. How old are you now? Mr Tascona realized Lassie is a dog, not a person. Very good. Staffordshire bull terriers, here at Queen's Park on Wednesday, November 17, at 12:30, a press conference and a Super Dog show that's going to impress the daylight out of anybody who attends. Look, you'll have a chance to look at these vicious dogs that this breed-specific ban proposes.

If the government can demonstrate, based on the evidence that's available, that the breed-specific ban is the way to legitimately address dog bites in the province, then so be it; let's do it. However, the evidence that's indicated to date shows no support whatsoever for breed-specific bans, as compared to broader vicious dog legislation and controls of dogs and owners.

**Mr Milloy:** I think what is being forgotten in the debate tonight by my friends from the opposition side is that this is a bill about public safety. What is being forgotten tonight are the victims of dog attacks, people who have suffered due to vicious pit bulls. I met a man during constituency week who told me about working in his yard one afternoon and a pit bull that was next door jumped over the fence without provocation and attacked him. The simple fact is that pit bulls have an aggressive tendency which needs to be dealt with.

At the same time, there are other issues surrounding vicious dogs. I take issue with the member from Simcoe North and my friend from the Niagara Falls area who say that this bill does not address it. I'd like to quote from the bill and go to section 15:

"(1) A peace officer may seize a dog in a public place if the officer believes on reasonable grounds that,

"(a) the dog has on one or more occasions bitten or attacked a person or domestic animal;

"(b) the dog has on one or more occasions behaved in a manner that poses a menace to the safety of persons or domestic animals;

"(c) an owner of the dog has on one or more occasions failed to exercise reasonable precautions to prevent the dog from,

"(i) biting or attacking a person or domestic animal."

Yes, this bill deals with pit bulls, but this is not solely about pit bulls. It's addressing the sorts of concerns that the member from Simcoe North repeatedly said need to be addressed by this government, that is, aggressive and vicious dogs that are not being properly controlled in public.

The second thing it's about, and I spoke about that in my last two minutes, is this patchwork of municipalities who have passed various bans throughout the province. They are looking to this government for leadership, and

this government is showing the type of leadership that's needed to bring safety to the streets of Ontario.

**2050**

**Mr Tascona:** I am pleased to join in the debate. I know the member from Oak Ridges is eager to join in the debate too.

I just want to say that here we are debating pit bulls, and in my riding we have people who have to come to Toronto every day for cancer treatment. We don't have a cancer treatment area in Newmarket or in Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford. We don't have that. A children's treatment centre doesn't exist in our area. Every other area in the province has a children's treatment centre. And here we are debating pit bulls.

The Attorney General has misled the public. I've talked to people in his own riding about what's going on here. They think he's fundamentally changing the law with respect to dangerous dogs. He is not doing anything in terms of changing the laws with respect to dangerous dogs—not one thing. The law is already in place to be enforced by municipalities. So he's misleading his own constituents that he's doing something about dangerous dogs in this province. All he's talking about is banning pit bulls.

I can tell you, the problem we have to deal with here—you heard it from the member from Niagara Centre and we've heard it throughout tonight—is that dangerous dogs per se are the issue and we have to bring forth legislation to deal with that. That's why there's resistance on the opposition side. They know the Attorney General is misleading the issue. They're telling the public that it is something to do with dangerous dogs, that he's changing the laws. He's not doing anything, because the municipalities have the power to deal with dangerous dogs and they are dealing with them. But the Attorney General is doing nothing about changing the law to fundamentally address dangerous dogs and protect the public. When we get through with this legislation, nothing will have changed, because the Attorney General misled the public.

**Ms Martel:** In response to the comments that were made by the member, one of the last points he made was to focus on the public hearings. Of course, I believe it is essential that the government agree to full and open public hearings on this particular issue. I think it would be very important that through that process those people the Attorney General said he heard from during the course of putting this legislation together come forward and give their reasons and rationale for the information they provided to the Attorney General. It's my hope that through the process, some of those people who, we understand, have not been able to talk to the Attorney General, who have made repeated requests to the Attorney General for some kind of consultation, would also be afforded the opportunity to come forward and make their case as well.

You see, my concern has been throughout the course of the discussion by the Attorney General around this issue, a discussion that has gone on all fall now, is, what

is the basis of the information he has presented? Where is the statistical data? Where is the information from other provinces or jurisdictions that have moved in this area? What does their data show? What has a ban accomplished or achieved? And frankly, from the other side, if there hasn't been an achievement by a ban, let's have that out as well. Realistically, we have heard from only one side in this debate, which I think does a disservice to all Ontarians who want to be sure they are safe from all dog attacks. That's what Ontarians want. That's what they want the government to deal with.

I don't know if we're going to get there with this legislation. That's why I think it is imperative that there be full public hearings, so everybody can have their say and so we can do the right thing, which is to achieve public safety in this regard.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Simcoe North has two minutes to wrap up.

**Mr Dunlop:** I want to thank the members for Niagara Centre, Kitchener Centre, Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford and Nickel Belt for their comments on the few words I mentioned. And the member from Oak Ridges wanted to say something as well.

But what's important here—there are two things that come to mind immediately. One is that there is a lot of opposition from a lot of very special stakeholder organizations that have a lot of interest in this legislation. We know now, and I think it's really clear that unless there's—

**Interjection:** Six weeks of hearings.

**Mr Dunlop:** A substantial number. I don't know whether it's one week, two weeks or six weeks, but I do think we need a lot of debate on this, and we'll probably have to travel over the winter months to work with it.

What's important, in my opinion, is that, yes, any accident is one accident too many, but there are so many priorities that this government should be dealing with. My friend from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, my colleague, mentioned just a few minutes ago about the cancer care unit in Barrie. We had a meeting the other morning. With the amount of growth in Barrie and the potential greenbelt legislation leapfrogging more growth into our region, we have an immediate demand for this cancer care unit, and we're out there fighting every day on this for this government to come up with some funding.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Dunlop:** I heard my colleague behind me, from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, talking about the BSE. When is that going to be corrected? The Canadian case in Alberta—no, the Washington case—happened almost a year ago. We keep hearing these promises, but all we get are these action plans and advisory panels saying nothing.

So a high priority is not the pit bull legislation. It's things like a children's treatment centre in York region and Simcoe.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Martel:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the debate this evening. Let me begin by

saying that I recognize this is a very controversial issue. I recognize it's a very emotional issue. I recognize as well that, for anyone who has been the victim of a pit bull bite or pit bull attack, it's a critical issue. But I also have to think that for anyone who has had a child bitten or attacked by any breed of dog, it's probably a critical issue for those folks as well. So what I hope, as we deal with this legislation and as we talk about victims, is that we're not just talking about victims of pit bull attacks but about victims of serious dog attacks of all kinds. I hope what motivates people, as this legislation continues through the process of second reading debate and committee hearings and amendments and third reading, is a real desire to deal with victims generally of dangerous and vicious dogs. That's what we need to do, that's what I think we have an obligation to do, and I hope the legislation, at the end of the day, reflects our trying to do that.

The legislation before us, as I understand it, comes from a particularly vicious, very high-profile and publicized attack by a pit bull that occurred earlier in August. I remember seeing that on television, and I remember that the next day, the Attorney General was saying very clearly that he was going to look at banning pit bulls. The immediate reaction from what you saw on television is that you would have to say to yourself, "Something should be done. We can't put up with this any more. If a ban on pit bulls is the way to get at protecting public safety, well, what's wrong with that?" That was my immediate reaction as I looked at it. You saw the consequences, which were very dramatic for that victim, very frightening—God knows what I would have felt like in their shoes—and you say to yourself, "We need to do something. If the AG is right that the way to do that is to ban pit bulls, then let's go to it and let's do it as soon as we can."

My opinion changed, in terms of having a broader perspective, probably eight to nine weeks ago. It changed because I was here in Toronto watching the news, and I heard a report of a couple from Sudbury who just that day had to drive their child from Sudbury to Sick Children's Hospital as a result of a dog attack in Sudbury. They had to come to Sick Kids to seek medical care here in Toronto. And that child was not attacked by a pit bull; that child was attacked by a German shepherd. That's when I started to think that we need to think beyond pit bulls and the impact on victims—and I know there's an impact—and start to seriously consider victims who have been attacked, aggressively attacked, by all dangerous dogs. It was because of that incident, understanding that a family from Sudbury had to come here to Sick Kids to seek medical attention because of an attack by a German shepherd.

**2100**

So I think that's where I start from tonight: my immediate reaction, which had been, "Ban pit bulls, ban them now, ban them fast, get it done and that's going to protect public safety," to a view now that says, "It's not only pit bulls, it's not just pit bulls." If I look at the

evidence of dog bites from my community, for example, pit bulls don't even figure into the equation in terms of dog bites—and I'll get to that—that have been statistically put together by the Sudbury district health unit. I hope what we are doing is actually crafting legislation that responds to victims of vicious dog attacks.

I am very concerned about some of the comments that have been made by the Attorney General. That's one of the reasons why I think we need public hearings. I'm very concerned because, if you follow what he has been saying, and I have tried to, he can be very contradictory when he deals with this issue, and I'm not sure where he's getting some of his information. I would hope he's getting the best information out there; I'm just not sure that he is and, if he is, he's certainly not relating it to the public.

I had a chance to read the transcript of the Attorney General's interview on Focus Ontario. It was taped Wednesday, October 27, and it aired on Saturday, October 30. I took a look through it, and I want to raise some of the concerns that I have with respect to what the Attorney General said about the legislation we're dealing with. A couple of concerns. First of all, he said to the host, Bill Carroll, "Well, we consulted widely, heard all—

**Hon Mr Bradley:** There's an impartial guy.

**Ms Martel:** No, I'm commenting on what the Attorney General said. I say this to Mr Bradley: I want you to listen to what the Attorney General said, OK?

**Hon Mr Bradley:** Bill Carroll is really impartial.

**Ms Martel:** I'm not even going to talk about Bill Carroll. I'm talking about what the Attorney General said, OK? Here's the Attorney General: "Well, we consulted widely, heard all arguments, and once a decision was made that these were inherent, dangerous dogs, I felt it was incumbent upon our government to move quickly."

All right: "We consulted widely and heard all the arguments." Well, here's a list of what I would consider to be credible, reasonable, rational organizations who I would assume have some expertise with respect to dangerous dogs and what we should do to deal with them. Here's what some of them said, for the record.

The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is opposed to the ban and has been calling for a national or provincial dog-bite registry for years. Their concern: This legislation doesn't address breeding for aggression, training for fighting or other issues related to responsible ownership. Further, this bill is not statistically supported. That's their view.

The second group, the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, a group that has some expertise in dealing with not just dogs but animals of all kinds: opposed to the ban out of concern for animal welfare; a big problem is lack of education; owners and the public don't know how to behave around dogs or read dogs' body language; breed bans won't help, education and non-breed-specific dangerous dog legislation to promote responsible ownership will; frustrated at the lack of opportunity for input on this issue; has asked the Attorney General four

times, three in writing, for a list of experts he has consulted, and the list has not yet been received.

The next group, the Canadian Kennel Club: opposed to the ban for legal reasons; does not believe that Ontario has the right or capacity to define a pit bull or that the courts or police officers may decide if a dog is a pit bull; Only an organization registered under the Animal Pedigree Act may define or certify dogs of any breed.

Toronto Humane Society: opposed to the ban out of concern for animal welfare; concerned with the overbreadth of the definition of pit bulls, the possible overbreadth to take action against “menacing” dogs; concerned that Bill 132 deliberately excludes humane societies; pit bulls may be surrendered to a city pound, not a humane society; frustrated at the lack of opportunity to consult with Mr Bryant; hopes to make a committee submission—and we hope they will get a chance to do that.

Canadian Federation of Humane Societies: opposed to the ban out of concern for animal welfare; wants a national dog bite registry; even the cities that banned breeds didn't base their decisions on data, because none existed, and didn't usually collect data afterward either; supports the spay/neuter requirement, general dangerous dog legislation and anything that increases owner responsibility.

Finally, the Canada Safety Council: opposed to the breed ban for public safety reasons; breed bans should not be used as a quick fix; the solution lies in a combination of effective animal control measures, reputable breeders, responsible owners, public education, backed up with enforcement and based on reliable data.

Those are some of the folks who have an opinion as well. It doesn't sound like some of those folks had much of an opportunity to consult with the Attorney General and give their reasons and their rationale and their concerns before the legislation was drafted. I trust that there are going to be some public hearings so that those folks can have their say and can have their concerns raised.

What else did the Attorney General say? He said, “We consulted widely, heard all the arguments. I really felt it was incumbent upon our government to move quickly, because every month that goes by that we don't have this ban in place is a month where Ontarians are at risk.” That would make it sound like as soon as the legislation is passed, the risk from pit bulls is over. And it's interesting that if you read the legislation, it's very clear that current owners of pit bulls are grandfathered; that is, their pit bulls, unless they are involved in an attack, are not going to be put down, are not going to be euthanized.

So the likelihood is—and I don't know what the lifespan of pit bulls is. Let's just say that any number of pit bulls out there continue to live five, six, seven, eight years in our communities. I'm sorry, but it's really hard for the Attorney General on this show, to tell people that we need to move on pit bulls and we're going to get rid of this risk because every month that they do not is a risk to public safety, and then have a bill before us that essentially allows current owners to continue to have

their dogs until they die of natural causes. Is he really concerned about public safety, or is this a way to try to get around it and convince the public that he's doing something about public safety, and maybe he's not? It's clear the legislation is quite a bit different than what the Attorney General had to say, and I think that needs to be dealt with in public hearings.

What else did he say? “Not a week goes by, it seems, in Ontario that we don't have an incident, and I certainly have become convinced, based on the thousands of unreported incidents involving pit bulls against other pets and people.” Well, if they're unreported, how can he truly make any legitimate comment about the thousands of incidents there might be out there? He said very specifically, “Not a week goes by, it seems, in Ontario that we don't have an incident”—that may be true—“and I certainly have become convinced, based on the thousands of unreported incidents”—and he goes on to say why we need to do something.

That's not a very good way to draft legislation. There's not a lot of fact there to support what he wants to say. Look, if there are thousands of incidents, let's have that information come forward from the health units across the province. I know my health unit does track the incidence of dog bites, not just pit bulls but every breed. They have to do that based on family members coming forward and reporting. As I understand it, in most municipalities there's not an obligation to report that. There probably should be. Let's find out what the incidents truly are, not just of pit bull bites but of bites of all breeds of dogs in our communities, and all bites. Then we would be in a good position, I think, based on some statistical information, to make decisions about what we need to do. But to go on the basis of thousands of unreported incidents, which makes no sense at all, and to be drafting legislation around that is just not the correct thing to do. I hope that at committee we will be able to get some concrete information about bites and breeds involved from across the province so we can make some intelligent decisions about what to do next.

#### 2110

What else did the Attorney General say? He talked about Winnipeg. He said, “They regulated pit bulls going forward, which is what we will do in the definition. Well, everybody knows a pit bull. If you buy a dog, you know what kind of dog it is in almost all cases. If you bought a pit bull, you know you've got a pit bull. If there was a pit bull in the studio right now, you and I would know it's a pit bull. If it walks and barks and bites like a pit bull, it is a pit bull.” I say to the Attorney General, who couldn't identify a pit bull in some photos, man, don't go down that road.

I am not ashamed to say that I don't think I know what a pit bull is. If there were one on the floor of the Legislature right now, could I positively identify that animal as a pit bull? Probably I couldn't, and I'm not ashamed to say that I probably couldn't. We really need, I think, to be a lot more clear than the Attorney General is about

what breed a pit bull is. I have heard some people say to me, it's up to 25 different ones.

The breeds the Attorney General wants to ban, and those are listed in the legislation, include, for example, a pit bull terrier, a Staffordshire bull terrier, an American Staffordshire terrier, an American pit bull terrier. Are those the ones out of the broader breed of pit bull that are the ones we need to be most concerned about?

I heard my colleague from Niagara Centre give a profile of the American Staffordshire terrier earlier. If I recall, the definition of that one was that it was very friendly, very good for families. A chihuahua was one that you wanted to be careful about, that wasn't good for families, that wasn't good in terms of the presence of other dogs.

No, I wouldn't know a pit bull if it was on the floor of the Legislature. I don't think the Attorney General would either. We've had some acknowledgement of that. When you start down the road of trying to say that everybody knows what a pit bull is and that's why we need to ban them, I think we've got some problems with that, not only with the definition but where we're heading in terms of trying to use a breed-specific definition to deal with this problem.

What else did he say? He talked about Winnipeg and said that Winnipeg has a definition that permitted the city to identify, and that as a result of that, the number of dog attacks overall went down so that it's not like the pit bull attacks were replaced by Doberman attacks or something like that.

We've got a bit of information about Winnipeg, which I think we should consider. It says the following: "In 1989, the year before Winnipeg implemented a pit bull ban, dog-biting incidents were as follows: 61 by German shepherd crossbreeds, 34 by German shepherds, 28 by pit bull types, 18 by collie crossbreeds, 11 by Dobermans. Since the ban, pit bull bites have dropped dramatically." I guess so; since 1989 there are probably not very many pit bulls left. "However, Rottweiler bites have increased from one in 1989 to 19 in 1996, 21 in 2001, and 22 in 2002. German shepherd crossbreed bites dropped slightly, then increased to 68 in 1997 and continued to fluctuate."

So the German shepherd bites—61 in 1989, up to 68 in 1997 and continuing to grow. The Rottweilers have grown tremendously. So in fact it isn't true to say that in Winnipeg, once the ban on pit bulls was in effect, no other breed stepped into the void in terms of bites by dangerous dogs. That's not true. In fact, other breeds are right up there, probably causing a significant concern for public safety in the same way that pit bulls ever did in Winnipeg.

We really need to have some much clearer statistical information, legitimate statistical information that looks at where other bans were tried and what the results were, because Winnipeg wasn't the only concern I had. If you look at Edmonton, we've got some statistics for 2000 and 2001, and you can see clearly that pit bulls, frankly, in the general scheme of things, were not a problem. In

2000, in Edmonton: 43 dog attacks by German shepherds, 22 by Rottweilers, 15 by Labs and four by pit bulls. Or, in 2001: 46 attacks by German shepherds, 39 by Rottweilers, 22 by Labs, 11 by collies, 10 by huskies and seven by pit bulls. It's hard to say the ban has solved the problem of dangerous dogs; what it looks like is that it just moved to other breeds and that dog bites and dog attacks are as prevalent as ever, now just involving other breeds. I'm not sure how we can say we've done anything with respect to public safety when those are the kinds of numbers we're looking at. We have a listing of a number of other communities with the same kind of result. That's why I hope there will be public hearings so these kinds of facts can come out.

One final thing: I talked to you about a number of things that the Attorney General has said, and I've got a lot of concerns with those. I've got a lot of concerns with respect to some groups who have tried to have their say, tried to have some input, and it seems they haven't been able to do that. I think their opinion and their expertise, frankly, given what they deal with in their professions, would be of great value for the committee.

As I said earlier, if I look at Sudbury, just some of the statistics in our communities, at the end of September we had 117 reported dog bites in the city. Of that number, six were pit bulls. So we've got a lot of dog bites and a lot of problems in our communities, and it's not really related to pit bulls. If we're going to deal with this in a rational way, if we're going to deal with public safety, we'd better get this bill to committee. We'd better get the groups forward and get some good statistical information before we decide what we're going to do.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Zimmer:** Notwithstanding everything we've heard tonight, the fact of the matter is that this legislation enjoys broad non-partisan support among community leaders throughout Ontario, and it enjoys broad editorial support.

Roger Anderson, president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario: "AMO appreciated an opportunity to advise the minister on how to implement the province's pit bull ban in a manner that is practical, effective and affordable for Ontario municipalities," and look forward to working with the minister in this regard.

Chief Julian Fantino, Toronto Police Service: "The legislation the Attorney General is proposing makes our playgrounds, sidewalks and neighbourhoods safer ... It is clearly in the best interest of public safety and it will help to protect our officers," and citizens, who face vicious attacks from these animals.

Mayor David Miller of the city of Toronto: "I support the province's swift action. This problem is not exclusive to any single municipality, it is a province-wide issue," and it's the best solution for a province-wide strategy.

Mayor Carl Zehr: "Every Ontarian in every city across Ontario deserves the same level of safety that we have in Kitchener. That's what this legislation would do."

There's editorial support. The Toronto Sun says, "It's taken much too long to happen, but Attorney General

Michael Bryant is doing the right thing to ban pit bull dogs in Ontario.”

The Globe and Mail: “Yes, implementing the ban will be difficult. Public safety is worth the effort. It’s a move long overdue.”

London Free Press: “Attorney General Michael Bryant’s strong stand in announcing legislation ... shows courage and resolve.”

The Toronto Star: “Whatever the decisive factor or factors, the days of pit bulls in this province and in this city’s streets and neighbourhoods are numbered. Hallelujah! Amen. And good riddance.”

The Peterborough Examiner: “Attorney General Michael Bryant’s announcement yesterday that legislation banning pit bulls will be introduced this fall shows that at least one level of government is serious about protecting the public.”

The Hamilton Spectator—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Zimmer:** —the Brampton Guardian, and the list goes on.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** I am certainly pleased to make a few comments on this bill that the Liberals want to bring in and seem to want us to debate here. It is now quarter after 9, and we’re in here tonight debating a bill on pit bulls. We have problems out there with our health system, our hospitals are begging for money, and you guys are in here worrying about pit bulls. Our farming communities are having difficulty, and you bring in a bill talking about pit bulls.

**2120**

One thing I want to tell you is, I hope you listened to the member from Sudbury, one of the veterans of this place and she knows what she’s talking about. She has some good information for you people, if you listen. The trouble is, you’re not listening. Here we are again tonight—I find it difficult. How did this bill even get past cabinet to get in here? Such a simple thing, and you want us to sit in here and debate, with all the problems we have out there today. You guys keep complaining that you can’t get your bills through, and we are sitting in here debating about pit bulls. You’ll be doing chihuahuas next, because somebody in your caucus will get bitten by a chihuahua and then you’ll be upset.

I understand that for anybody who’s been attacked by a dog it’s traumatic. We understand that over here, but you can’t just go around and start to ban them every time somebody gets bitten. It just won’t work, guys.

You’ve got it this far. It’s unfortunate that you even got it this far, that you got it through your cabinet, when we have other important things to look at. Now you are going to have to take it out and go to committee, because you obviously didn’t connect to the people in Ontario.

We heard one gentleman over here read about a lot of support. I don’t know where he’s getting that support, because I don’t hear that support out there for this. So you’re going to now have to take this to a committee and

take up committee time debating this. What you need to do is just withdraw this bill.

**Mr Kormos:** We all listened carefully to the member from Nickel Belt, Shelley Martel, and her comments on this bill. Her analysis of the bill is, quite frankly, bang on. New Democrats are making it very, very clear that this type of issue calls out for a serious and thorough examination of the evidence and the data, not the knee-jerk, hysterical reaction on the part of the Attorney General with all the fanfare and the spin-doctoring and the scripting by the backroom boys and girls.

This legislation has got to respond to the need to ensure, or at least improve to the maximum level possible, public safety. I say to you that the experts who have been revealed to us so far are unanimous in saying that breed-specific bans don’t work, that they create a false sense of security; in fact, you create a more dangerous scenario because of that false sense of security. The experience in jurisdictions where breed-specific bans have been implemented appears to confirm and reinforce what the experts tell us.

This government obviously has no interest in the facts. This government obviously has no interest in the data. This government and its members obviously have no interest in examining the evidence. I’ve got to tell you that I feel some great sympathy for the parliamentary assistant. He is paid a great deal of money to read off the government’s spin in here, notwithstanding that as a trained professional and competent lawyer he knows full well that this isn’t how you approach an issue. As a trained, competent professional lawyer, the parliamentary assistant knows that you’ve got to examine the facts carefully, critically and analytically. But—dare I say it, and I think I understand—as an ambitious parliamentary assistant, he is serving his master well. Indeed, he is like that pit bull sitting by the Victrola serving his master, right?

**Mr Lalonde:** I was listening very carefully to the comments brought forth by the member for Nickel Belt. She seemed to be concerned about how we would differentiate the breeds of dogs.

Let me tell you, member for Nickel Belt, municipal dog catchers are well-trained; they would definitely have the proper training to identify what is a pit bull and what is a poodle, and what is a pit bull and what is a chihuahua.

When the bill was introduced in the House, we had a lady sitting in the gallery from Chatham, Ontario, who had half her ear cut off. She was bitten by a pit bull while delivering the mail. She was a mail lady. Also, in my own riding, in the little town of Maxville, I received many phone calls prior to this bill being introduced. There is who is a breeder down there. He has 49 of them in his yard, and one day his neighbour called me and said, “Jean-Marc, I cannot even get in my house. There are two pit bulls on my veranda. What are you going to do?” I said, “Just call the municipality. They must have a dog catcher there.” That’s just to show you that it is a danger for the population.

We are committed to ensuring strong, safe communities across Ontario. We are responding to the safety concerns expressed by thousands of Ontarians by proposing this legislation to regulate pit bulls in the province.

We have enough evidence to support this bill. Now we are going to have a public hearing. At the beginning, people were concerned if they were going to have a say in it. Yes, there will be a public hearing and everybody will have a chance to say how they feel about it.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Nickel Belt has two minutes to summarize.

**Ms Martel:** I appreciate the comments of all those who participated in the rotation. Let me just say this: It's easy to do what's politically popular. It is, and I recognize that this matter is politically popular. The question I'm asking you to consider is, are we doing that is right for public safety? That's what I'm asking you to consider.

The member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell talks about the woman who was in the gallery who had half her ear chewed off. She's a victim and we want to protect her. But do you know what? That young child from Sudbury whose parents had to drive her down here to Sick Kids because she had been attacked by a German

shepherd: Do you want to protect her too? Yes or no? That's what I'm asking you to consider.

If you look in my community and you look at the bites in the last year in Sudbury—and the Sudbury and District Health Unit actually tracks this—of 117 reported dog bites, six were from pit bulls. The majority were from German shepherds, the same one that attacked this young girl. Are we doing anything about German shepherds? If you look at Winnipeg, you clearly see that although you banned pit bulls, other dogs came to the fore in terms of attacks on people: German shepherds and Rottweilers. So we didn't deal with the very difficult issue of dog attacks and dog bites from vicious dogs. We replaced one breed for another. What is the sense of that if you are not increasing public safety?

I hope we have public hearings because I think there are lots of people with lots of expertise who can come forward and tell us what is the best way for us to protect the public against vicious dogs. I'm not sure that it's a breed-specific ban. I hope we're going to find that out during the public hearings.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being near 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 13:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 2128.*

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Ted McMeekin, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O. Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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