



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

To: Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee

From: American Kennel Club
Jennifer Clark, AKC Director of Legislative Outreach
and Rob Sexton, AKC Consultant

Date: October 14, 2025

Re: American Kennel Club Support for HB 247

Mr. Chairman, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am Rob Sexton, representing the American Kennel Club along with my colleague Jennifer Clark. Since 1884 the AKC has been the country's leading authority on all things dogs, the premier resource for dog lovers, from the fancier to the everyday owner. Along with our affiliated organizations and our over 220 dog clubs throughout the state, comprised of thousands of responsible Ohio dog owners, breeders, and trainers, we encourage dogs as family companions; advance canine health and well-being; advocate for dog owner rights; and educate the public about responsible dog ownership.

Responsible dog ownership is the key point of our testimony as a proponent of House Bill 247. Part of owning and enjoying dogs is good training and prudent action when a dog's behavior and habits are headed in the wrong direction. Like anyone who has read the series of media reports or witnessed the testimony in the House about dog attacks, we are horrified and saddened by the loss of life and grave injuries suffered by the victims. We agree with Representative Miller that this is an essential issue, and we're pleased to volunteer our help and support.

House Bill 247 is a reasonable and effective approach. It holds owners accountable and implements protocols to deal with dangerous and vicious dogs to ensure the public is protected. The bill is carefully written to ensure injuries that could result in a vicious, dangerous or nuisance dog designation exclude physical harm resulting from a situation where the dog behaves in a playful, nonaggressive, or age-appropriate manner. This language will help to prevent unnecessary litigation or sanctions against dog owners that result from, for example, nips that may break the skin but are quite common with puppies. The bill is also carefully worded to focus on problem dogs, and does not apply to dogs used in hunting, field trials or other dog performance events, that may be seen unleashed.

However, HB 247 also ensures that its sanctions apply to dogs that are acting in a menacing fashion or with an apparent attitude of attack.

Because the bill requires dog training in certain cases, HB 247 also protects trainers by requiring that dog owners notify them about their dog's history in advance. This allows trainers to plan to protect themselves and ensure the safety of other dogs and their owners that may be present. It also ensures that the appropriate training is provided.

AKC thanks Representative Miller and the House of Representatives for crafting a bill that provides clear accountability for dog owners and protection for others who encounter dogs throughout their lives.

The American Kennel Club supports House Bill 247 as written and asks that the Senate Judiciary Committee approve it for full consideration before the full Senate. Thank you.

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