



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

February 20, 2014

Re: AKC Opposes Senate File 2166 – Commercial Breeder Regulations

Dear President Jochum and Members of the Iowa State Senate:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) writes on behalf of our 64 dog clubs and thousands of responsible dog owners, breeders and sportsmen in Iowa to respectfully ask you to oppose Senate File 2166 and not allow it to advance.

AKC's mission includes working to advance canine health and well-being, promoting responsible dog ownership and protecting the rights of responsible dog owners.

Responsible dog owners and breeders have a significant impact on the Iowa economy. In 2013 alone, over 220 AKC dog events took place in the state, in which over 32,000 dogs participated from across the United States. These events generate significant revenue for local businesses in addition to the thousands of dollars each dog owner spends in a year on veterinary care, grooming, and basic dog needs.

Responsible breeders are models for their communities. They raise healthy dogs and work to ensure that puppies are placed with responsible owners. These breeders are in a unique position to support new pet owners and teach them to be responsible dog owners. Continuing to pass restrictive legislation will send the very clear message that responsible dog owners and breeders are not welcome in Iowa and could result in the loss of the ability to continue to obtain a quality purebred dog from a responsible Iowa breeder. It could also lead to a significant loss of revenue for Iowa communities.

We strongly believe that all dogs deserve to live in safe, healthy environments and should not be kept in conditions where their basic needs are not met. **As currently written, however, SF 2166 would be detrimental to responsible Iowa dog owners and breeders and make it virtually impossible for responsible dog owners and breeders to continue to raise quality, healthy purebred dogs.** We have numerous concerns with this bill, including, but not limited to the following:

- **Prohibiting breeders from being involved in rescue activities**– This bill prohibits any “commercial breeder” from owning, operating, or maintaining a controlling interest in an “animal shelter”. Many breeders not only ensure the puppies they raise are placed in loving, safe homes, they also provide significant resources to rescue activities including time, expertise and housing. This would prohibit them from engaging in these important activities that help ensure the long term health and wellbeing of all dogs.
- **Significantly increasing license fees**– Under SF 2166, breeders would be required to pay a fee that is significantly higher than that in current law. This is an extensive burden on breeders – particularly considering the numerous expensive, engineering changes they may be required to make to their kennels to be in compliance with this law. The bill also mentions on page 6, line 6, that the fees could impact those who keep at least one dog. We request this be clarified as one dog does not meet the threshold of commercial breeder.

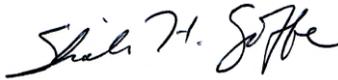
Furthermore, these increased fees would be deposited in a new “animal rescue remediation fund.” Current law already allows the court to require someone accused of cruelty to post a bond during the hearing to pay for the care of the animals, rendering this unnecessary and duplicative.

- **Mandating inspections of all “commercial breeders”** – Under SF 2166, anyone who meets the definition of “commercial breeder” must make their premises available for inspection during normal business hours as a condition of obtaining or renewing a license. This is of particular concern to people who keep a few dogs in their home and do not have “normal business hours”, because they could find themselves in violation of state law simply for keeping intact dogs and not being at home when the inspector happens to come by. It is also an unnecessary and costly drain on state resources.

Senate File 2166 violates the rights of responsible dog owners and breeders in Iowa and does nothing to further protect the health and welfare of dogs. We respectfully ask that you oppose this proposal and not allow it to advance. The American Kennel Club welcomes the opportunity to work with you to develop legislation that would address any concerns you might have without harming responsible dog owners. Please contact us at (919) 816-3720 or doglaw@akc.org if we can be of assistance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila H. Goffe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sheila Goffe
Government Relations Director