



UKC Position on Mandatory Spay and Neuter

United Kennel Club opposes mandatory sterilization of dogs for a myriad of reasons that far outweigh what little benefit could be gained. The unintended consequence of these types of laws are what the law intends to stop: putting more dogs in shelters. Many owners end up dumping or surrendering dogs in fear of being ticketed or because they cannot afford to spay or neuter their dog; these laws end up mostly hurting the poor. Many others simply evade licensing their dog, resulting in decreased revenue to animal control from license fees which in turn results in decreased enforcement of a law that is incredibly difficult to enforce in the first place.

UKC also opposes mandatory sterilization of dogs on behalf of the dogs themselves. More and more studies demonstrate increased health risks for sterilized dogs, particularly when done under a year of age. Sterilization can increase the risk of osteosarcoma, hemangiosarcoma, hypothyroidism, spay incontinence in females, and one study even showed a link to hip dysplasia. Another study with aged Rottweilers showed exceptional life longevity was linked to retention of ovaries. Even outside all of these studies, sterilization is the invasive removal of an important organ, it is a surgery that like any other carries risk, and is a decision that should not be made lightly by the government but should be left to the dog's owner.

Instead of forced sterilization, a better option would be to focus on owner responsibility through enforcement of current laws, dog owner education, and low or no cost spay and neuter clinics for when an owner makes the choice to spay or neuter. A responsible dog owner's property rights should be protected: so long as the responsible owner follows the rules, they should have the right to determine when and what invasive medical procedures and alterations are made to their dog. UKC believes in more onus on owner responsibility and stronger enforcement of current laws as better alternatives to lower euthanasia rates and shelter numbers. Bottom line, mandatory sterilization does not achieve what it seeks to accomplish, and these laws simply do not work.