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I have been raising, exhibiting, living with and loving **American Staffordshire Terriers** for over fifteen years. It is my intention to speak about dogs in general, American Staffordshire Terriers in particular, rather than to debate the merits of a well intentioned, but inappropriate piece of legislation.

The foundation of this proposed bill lies in one and a half pages of what is titled legislative findings that propose to list characteristics of certain breeds, certain dangerous breeds. My personal favorite is the "genetic predisposition to aggressiveness... that makes them uniquely dangerous, even to their owners." Fortunately my dogs cannot read for surely the thirty-some Staffs we live with would have done us in by now if they knew how bad they were.

I do not know what empirical data was used to compile these Legislative Findings, but I do know my findings are based on fifteen years deeply involved with this breed. When someone calls me to inquire about a Staff because they like the dogs appearance, but know little or nothing about them, the first word I use is affectionate. This is the most loving, kiss your face, do anything to please you, sixty pound lap dog I have ever been around.

People that know me have come to accept that if I have a chance to kiss a happy dog face, I will do it. These dogs can not read either, I have not been bit. Over the years I have taken food, toys, shoes or anything else out of their mouths and have not been bit. I have had two dogs have a disagreement and I broke them up by putting my arm between their mouths - not real intelligent, I admit - but I have not been bit.

I am also a professional groomer, I see all breeds. If you groom long enough, you do get bit. If I wanted to compile a list there are certainly a few breeds that have done the major share of the biting. I do not like to get bit, but never would I even think about labeling an entire breed because of the behavior of a few.

I would like to conclude by relating any incident that occurred about 9 years ago. Due to dog fighting on the rise in some of our urban areas some municipalities were introducing Breed Specific Legislation - fortunately our legislative leaders acted to enact the current dangerous dog laws, as well as to make dog fighting a felony. Concerning the issue of dangerous dogs, I was invited to appear on a morning television talk show in Philadelphia with one of my dogs. While we were sitting backstage and being prepped as to the format, the host, Wally Kennedy walked over to see us. My dog "John Henry," seventy pounds of muscle was lying on the floor next to my chair when Wally inadvertently stepped on his tail. John Henry sprang to his feet and put his front paws on Wally. You should have seen the expression on his face, then in the **classic genetic predisposition** of Staffs out came the wet tongue going a mile a minute as if to say, "Hey, I know you didn't mean it." Of course Wally didn't want his make-up smeared so there were no tongues that day. With that one spontaneous act we see the true nature of the breed.

*All dogs can be trained to be dangerous,
but they are not born that way.*

Thank you.