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Is Breed to Blame in Fatal Dog Attack?

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But the bans are attractive because of the data that is available on fatal dog attacks. According to research by Karen Delise, the author of "Fatal Dog Attacks: The Stories Behind the Statistics," 21 percent of the 431 fatal dog attacks between 1965 and 2001 were carried out by "pit bull and pit bull-type dogs."

But there is a more telling statistic in the research available on dog attacks, said Ledy VanKavage, an attorney with the ASPCA.

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Some 95 percent of the attacks on humans come from dogs that have not been spayed or neutered, and 70 percent of the attacks were committed by unneutered males, she said.

"Legislators should look at the statistics and enact legislation to protect people from vicious dogs of any breed, whether it be Pomeranian or Rottweiler," VanKavage said.

That means making it easier for people to get their pets spayed or neutered, and creating and enforcing legislation requiring people to be responsible dog owners, no matter what breed they have, she said.

Strand said that is the kind of legislation the NAIA supports, as well.

"Responsible dog ownership and reasonable, enforceable laws, not Draconian prohibitions, are the keys to preventing tragedies like the one that recently occurred in San Francisco," Strand said. "Breed-specific laws fail because they do not take into consideration the reality that any dog, regardless of its physical characteristics, must be raised, trained and socialized properly to become a good pet and canine good citizen."

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