

Ontario Warriors United Against BSL

SAMPLING OF VICTIMS OF ONTARIO'S BREED SPECIFIC LEGISLATION

The Story of Gamboa

- In early July of 2020, Gamboa was found outside his home as he had escaped from his yard.
- A good Samaritan picked Gamboa up to keep him safe and took him to the local animal shelter, Vaughan Animal Services.
- On arrival the shelter manager, Susan Kelly, deemed Gamboa to be a "pit bull", therefore illegal in the province of Ontario. She refused to return the dog to his family using DOLA.
- Gamboa's family provided vet records proving breed, a Labrador/American Bulldog mix, however the records were not accepted.
- 2 separate veterinarians confirmed that Gamboa was not a banned breed, as required in DOLA.
- VAS insisted on conducting a DNA test, even though DNA is not in DOLA. The results of a DNA test are not accepted in the court as proof of breed due to inaccuracy.
- The public and the media became aware of the situation in Vaughan and were enraged at the treatment of this family and their dog by VAS. The #freegamboa social media campaign soon started, garnering support from across Ontario and even all of Canada.
- The DNA test stated that Gamboa was an American Staffordshire Terrier, therefore a banned breed.
- Gamboa spent 7 months living in a cage while his family continued the legal fight to have him returned home. AC confirmed Gamboa had a good temperament.
- Gamboa was shipped to Laval, Quebec, away from his loving home, leaving his whole family devastated.
- Gamboa's family continues to fight for the return of their well socialized family dog.
- Estimated cost to the city of Vaughan for this case, including boarding, shelter staff, legal fees, and relocation of the dog (note that legal proceedings in this case are ongoing and this number is rising on a daily basis): **23,000.00\$**

The story of Ringo

- Ringo is a 12 year old dog found by a family after escaping from his yard in Vaughan in the fall of 2020. To keep him safe, the people who found him brought Ringo to Vaughan Animal Shelter until his owner was located.
- VAS refused to give the owner back her dog, as the microchipping information from the shelter where he was adopted claimed that Ringo was part "pit bull" making him illegal in Ontario under DOLA.
- VAS insisted on conducting a DNA test to determine the accurate breed of the dog, as his breed remained questionable judging on his physical characteristics alone. They confirmed if he was part "pit bull" he would either be euthanized or rehomed out of Ontario.
- A petition was started to help Ringo be released, and stated that "there is no reason for [BSL to be used to detain the dog] except for an overzealous organization that seems to have taken it upon themselves to rid the province of any animal which could remotely look like a pit bull" that quickly received over 5000 signatures.
- There was never confirmation if VAS conducted the DNA test. Ringo was released due to what is believed to be public pressure and outrage (there was a lot of negative press on social media, and throughout the public).

- VAS stated to Ringo's owner "we don't deem him pit bull enough to be held".
- Ringo was released after approximately one week, because it was finally determined, by an unknown reason, that he was not "pit bull" enough for VAS to continue to hold using DOLA. If this was the case, Ringo should have been released immediately, not a week later.
- Assuming that the DNA test was never conducted, the estimated cost to the city of Vaughan for this case, including boarding, shelter staff, and other care: **700.00\$**

The story of Odie

- In early summer of 2019, Odie, a Boxer/Labrador cross from Sault Ste. Marie, was outside playing in his yard with his human brother and sister when a bear approached his family. Odie chased the bear off the property and became lost in the woods.
- Odie is a service dog to his owner, who suffers from PTSD.
- The family searched for their dog with no luck, however he was found by a good Samaritan and brought to the SSM Humane Society for his safety, awaiting the return to his family.
- SSMHS advised the owner that the dog needed a vet visit, including a rabies vaccination, or he could not be returned to her. The shelter also determined that due to his physical characteristics, Odie was a "pit bull" type dog, illegal in Ontario, and stated they required confirmation of breed prior to being released.
- Owner asked a Canadian Kennel Club judge to confirm breed, which she did confirm as a Boxer Labrador mix. This confirmation was not accepted by SSMHS.
- With nowhere else to turn, the owner went to social media for help. When she returned the next day to SSMHS, she was verbally assaulted by the manager, who stated that due to defamatory and threatening comments from within the community (i.e. not from the owner), they were forced to hire extra security.
- The manager of SSMHS advised the owner of Odie that she believed the paperwork for the dog was falsified, and that her dog would never be allowed to go home. Owner panicked and again went to social media for help.
- The owner returned again, requesting to see her dog and make sure he was ok. She also requested that he be given his bed from home for some comfort. These requests were both denied.
- Owner advised SSMHS that she was going to call her MPP for help, and with this statement the manager advised her she was not allowed back in the SSMHS or she would be charged with trespassing.
- Owner retained a lawyer for help to bring her dog home.
- Owner was officially charged under DOLA for owning an illegal dog and allowing him to stray. The case was moved to a provincial court system in Sudbury, where it was originally stated that the charges would be dropped and Odie could go home (July). For unknown reasons, the crown withdrew this statement and moved the trial to mid August.
- Odie was officially released just prior to the August trial for reasons that were not provided to the general public. Odie was allowed to go home after more than 2 months of being confined to a cage.
- Odie suffered many symptoms of PTSD after arriving at home, including physical wounds likely caused from panic attacks from being confined. His family comforted him to the best of their ability, however it wasn't until he got a new dog brother that he once more became the loving and affectionate dog he was prior to being imprisoned by SSMHS.
- Estimated cost to the city of SSM in this instance, including boarding, veterinary care, shelter staff, and legal fees: **10,000.00\$**

The story of Kilo

- In mid October, 2020, a dog named Kilo, a French Bull Dog/Bull Terrier mix, slipped his collar while on a walk and ran after a skunk. His family searched high and low but couldn't find him anywhere... A good Samaritan picked Kilo up, and to ensure he was safe until his owners were located brought him to Vaughan Animal Shelter.
- Kilo is a service dog to his owners son, who suffers from severe mental health issues. He relies on Kilo to maintain his well being.
- Immediately on discovery of Kilo's whereabouts, the family immediately went to VAS to pick up their family dog. Their son was especially grateful that his guardian angel – his service dog, Kilo.
- On arrival to VAS to pick Kilo up, the owners were advised that their small dog had been deemed a "pit bull", therefore illegal in the province of Ontario.
- The owners returned with adoption papers and vet letters proving the breed of their dog as a French Bull Dog/Bull Terrier mix. Though Kilo looked very much like a French Bulldog, the paperwork was rejected by VAS.
- VAS advised the owners that they are allowed to hold animals at their discretion if they suspect they are an illegal breed.
- VAS advised the owners that they can surrender Kilo to be transported out of province, or could fight in court and end up having the dog euthanized.
- Owners were devastated, and tried to explain to their son why his dog couldn't return. They found themselves in tears several times a day, missing their family dog.
- It is strongly believed that because of public outrage that Kilo was released without further testing being conducted. This was the same time period that Ringo and Gamboa were being detained at the same shelter.
- Estimated cost to the city of Vaughan for Kilo, including boarding, shelter staff and additional care while in their custody: **1000.00\$**

The story of Rosie

- In September of 2019, a dog, Rosie, was found in a car near a community of West Gray that was being towed. Police called animal control to remove the dog prior to towing. They claimed that the dog was showing aggression in the car, and Cheryl Roberts was the responding AC officer.
NOTE: Most dogs in locked cars show signs of reactivity to strangers. This does not equate to the accurate use of the term "aggression", which was used instead of "reactive" or "fearful".
- The dog, red in color, was growling at the strangers outside the car and was deemed to be a "pit bull" by Cheryl Roberts.
- The owner called Cheryl Roberts in the morning and said that he was coming to pick his dog up. Cheryl Roberts refused, and stated that his dog was a "pit bull" and was prohibited in the province of Ontario according to DOLA.
- Cheryl Roberts then stated that the dog must be surrendered immediately, or the owner would be charged under DOLA.
- There was no confirmation of breed: no DNA test was conducted, and no paperwork was submitted. Breed identification was all based on the opinion of the pound vet and was based on the physical appearance of the dog.
- Animal Control and the vet, Dr. Charlton, both stopped taking calls from the owner and his family about Rosie, their family pet.

- Cheryl Roberts advised the owner of Rosie, a well behaved, well loved family dog, that walking her around was equivalent to walking around with an AK47 and that Rosie must be destroyed. The owner, in shock from her accusation, still refused to surrender his dog.
- The owner was threatened with lengthy court proceedings and was told that “Rosie will be euthanized either way”. She also advised him that nobody had ever won against her in a court case regarding a “pit bull”, and proudly boasted about already euthanizing 3 “pit bulls” that month. The owner did not have money for a long court trial, and was lost as to what he could do.
- Cheryl Roberts then contradicted everything she had said previously, and stated that Rosie was being a good dog at the shelter, and that the vet had also confirmed this.
- With a broken heart, after being threatened by Cheryl Roberts, the owner surrendered his dog. He was given 30 minutes to say goodbye to Rosie. The owner stated that it looked like she had not been fed, and that her hair was falling out. This had NEVER happened before and he was distraught that she was not being properly cared for since being impounded by Cheryl Roberts.
- Rosie was not provided with an opportunity to be rehomed out of province. Due to their determination of visual breed identification being that of a “pit bull” and their determining that a terrified dog was aggressive rather than afraid, Rosie was in fact, ordered to be euthanized. This was never confirmed with the owner as he was too emotionally distraught to ask.
- The owner to this day suffers from severe emotional turmoil after the treatment by Cheryl Roberts and Dr. Charlton to both himself and his dog. He remains fearful that his new dog, who is American Bully Kennel Club registered pure breed American Bully (exempt from DOLA) will also be removed from his family, as Cheryl Roberts warned him that if he ever got another “pit bull” she would take it again.
- Prior to the encounter with West Grey AC officers, Rosie was considered by neighbors and their children as a somewhat shy, friendly, and happy neighborhood pet.
- Estimated cost to the city of West Grey for this case, including boarding, shelter staff, veterinary care, legal counsel, and euthanization: **2000.00\$**

The story of Blue

- In late January 2021, the owner of a dog named Blue was called and advised that they had a “pit bull”, which is an illegal breed in the province of Ontario. Animal control (Cheryl Roberts) advised the owners that their dog had been spotted running at large. Blue was at home with his owners at the time, as proved by their home surveillance cameras.
- Blue is an American Bulldog mix and is registered with the township of Tara. He is a registered service dog to one of his owners who suffers from severe PTSD.
- Cheryl Roberts insisted that Blue be destroyed, as she had determined him to be a “pit bull”. When the family refused, she informed them that they were required to do so according to DOLA, and that she wanted to see the dead body by the end of the week to prove that the dog was indeed dead. The family obviously refused.
- Papers were provided to Cheryl Roberts confirming the breed of dog with the Certificate of Vaccination from Owen Sound Veterinary Clinic. Vaccination papers confirmed American Bulldog. This paperwork was not accepted.
- The owners spoke to the police about the harassment of Cheryl Roberts. The police agreed that the behavior was not acceptable and confirmed that her dog was a registered legal breed that posed no threat to public safety. They said they would not do anything to her dog, however couldn't do anything about Ms. Roberts.

- At least twice a week, animal control patrols around her house, actively looking to see if there is any sign of the dog being loose.
- After 4 months of harassment, Cheryl Roberts served papers to Blues owner for owning an illegal dog in Ontario. His owner, again who suffers from PTSD, has deteriorating health issues because of this ordeal, and now has to go to court in the middle of a global pandemic and stay at home order to fight for his dogs freedom.
- During court appearances, the case was deemed as not a high priority to the township and was pushed back until September 2021. There was a verbal agreement between lawyers that Blue was not to be touched until the court case.
- Starting on July 29th, Cheryl Roberts drove by the owners home daily, slowing down each time when she was in front of the house.
- August 10, 2021 Cheryl Roberts appeared at the home of Blue and his owners with a warrant for “all pit bulls in the house”. She brought 6 police officers with her to the home.
- Blues owners argued the warrant and refused to let them in their home. One of them was arrested for obstruction of justice. The other was allowed to go get Blue to take him out to the cage where Cheryl Roberts was waiting.
- To their horror, they ALSO took Lulu, their 9 month old American Bully (again – not a banned breed according to DOLA).
- Blue and Lulu are both now in custody of Arran Elderslie, accumulating costs each day for boarding, and legal proceedings are ongoing for the township as well as the owners.
- Their owners continue to fight for their dogs release. Their owner is suffering immensely as his service dog has been removed from his life. The repercussions of this could be dire, both to the family as well as the township and even the province.
- Estimated cost to date for the township of West Grey to date for legal fees and court proceedings – **6000.00\$** and counting (will easily be 10,000\$ by the time this trial is complete, if not more)

The story of Nove and Dexter

- On March 15th, 2021, the owners of Nove and Dexter, 2 registered American Bully Kennel Club American Bully's, went missing around 5:45 pm in the township of West Grey.
- Nove and Dexter's owners frantically searched for them, until they saw the post that their dogs had been located and were safe at the vet in Durham, Dr. Kent's veterinarian clinic. The people who found the dogs said the dogs were both friendly, appeared to be well cared for, and were well trained.
- Nove and Dexter were both microchipped.
- Nove and Dexter's owners immediately went to get their dogs, however Dr Kent informed them that the AC control officer, Cheryl Roberts, had deemed them to be “pit bulls”, therefore illegal in the province of Ontario. He was forbidden from returning the dogs to the owner.
- Owners called Cheryl Roberts and she advised them that their dogs had substantially similar characteristics of “pit bulls” according to clause (e) in DOLA. An email was sent that night day with registration papers proving accurate breed.
- Cheryl Roberts asked about the puppies that Nove had recently had, asking how much the owner had received for each and how many there were. She then again advised the owner once again that her dogs were illegal. Dexter is not the sire of the puppies in question.

- Owner stated that she has registration papers and pedigree showing their breed as American Bully, which is not an illegal breed in DOLA. She was laughed at by Cheryl Roberts. She still did not accept the registration papers as proof.
- Cheryl Roberts informed her that she would be charged under DOLA unless she agreed to surrender both dogs to the shelter. Owner said no way and hired a lawyer.
- 3 days later, Cheryl Roberts called again and advised the owner that she was going to be charged under DOLA unless she surrendered the dogs immediately. Cheryl Roberts informed the owner that she could send them “underground” to Saskatchewan if she agreed to surrender the dogs.
- Cheryl Roberts now insisted on a DNA test, even though the owner re-sent the pedigree papers that were once again, not accepted. Although DNA is not a reliable source for identifying accurate breed of dog, a DNA test was conducted. The DNA test also confirmed that the owner was telling the truth and BOTH dogs came back 100% American Bully. This was still not accepted as proof of breed.
- Cheryl Roberts has determined that an American Bully is the same thing as a “pit bull” and refuses to allow the dogs to go home. Even with confirmation from a court recognized expert on dog behavior and identification, as well as a detailed account of the American Bully by the creator of the breed, Nove and Dexter remain in a cage.
- Even with all the proof that has been provided to the township on the accurate breed of Nove and Dexter, Cheryl Roberts is using the “substantially similar” clause in DOLA to keep the dogs detained, and has advised that the dogs will be shipped out of province at the end of May, 2021.
- A lawyer was retained by the owner for the safe return of her family dogs. To date, the cost to the owner is more than 12,000\$.
- Nove and Dexter were moved to a safe location in Quebec where they are being looked after and are safe from the clutches of West Grey and Cheryl Roberts. They have been in said location since early June.
- Nove and Dexter’s owner continues to fight to get her dogs home. Currently their owner is seeking legal aid to have the dogs returned.
- The city of West Grey is considering the matter to be closed, however it will not be closed until the 2 legal dogs are returned to their owner, therefore the cost to the city continues to build.
- Estimated cost **TO DATE** to the city of West Grey for this case, including boarding, shelter staff, DNA testing, a lawyer, and ongoing legal proceedings (which is not yet included in our estimates): **8000.00\$** and counting.

The story of Mya

- Mya is a pure breed American Bully, ABKC registered, who lives in the Hamilton area of Ontario. She escaped her back yard in mid October of 2019, and was found across the street at a dog training facility who called animal control.
- Mya is a behaviorally sound, loved, and well socialized family pet, up to date on her vetting.
- Mya was brought to the animal shelter in Hamilton until her owners were found. She was determined to be a “pit bull” by the shelter staff, therefore illegal in the province of Ontario.
- Mya was held by HAS for 8 days while her owner worked hard to gather evidence proving she was not a “pit bull”, even though it was deemed that she had substantially similar characteristics to one of the banned breeds according to DOLA.
- Mya’s owner sent in a letter from her veterinarian which stated she was an American Bulldog (which was in error as she is an American Bully). Animal control did not accept the vet letter as proof of breed.

- Mya's owner refused to accept the classification of "pit bull" by the shelter, refused to surrender her dog, and kept fighting for her freedom.
- A veterinarian, at the request of Mya's owner, visited the shelter to confirm breed. She included the UKC registration papers proving lineage of both parents as American Bully's. Still, Mya remained in custody of the Hamilton Animal Shelter.
- After more than a week in custody at HAS, Mya was returned to her family, including her human siblings, due to the physical confirmation of breed conducted by the veterinarian: he officially deemed her not to be a banned breed according to DOLA.
- The estimated cost involved in this case was approximately: **500.00\$** as some of the costs involved were charged back to the owner.