

# Ontario Coalition Against BSL

This is a story about a very special dog named Maurice.

It has been almost 1.5 years since Maurice has lived with his wonderful mom, Sarah, in California. He is loved. He is spoiled. He is safe. And most importantly, this handsome boy is an integral part of Sarah's life, which she would tell you is an understatement. Their bond was love at first sight, and they both bring so much joy and laughter to one another's lives. It is crystal clear that this is the fate for handsome Maurice. He has made tremendous strides in his self-confidence, his recall or new and exciting vocabulary, his never-ending desire to please, and his ability to trust. Maurice has opened his heart to Sarah, and he knows he is HOME!

Maurice's life is a lucky one. You see, Maurice is a "pit bull" type dog, and we all know what that means, especially here in Ontario. This is a story of Maurice's early life, and what could have been...

In October of 2015, Maurice's pregnant mother was rescued from a sophisticated backyard dogfighting ring in Chatham, Ontario. The many, many other dogs rescued from that ring, along with their unborn puppies, became known as the #Chatham21. Maurice and the other puppies were born in the custody of the Ontario SPCA, and were for the time being, safe. As the case against those who ran the dog fighting ring dragged on for 2 years (!), Maurice was held in secret, along with his littermates and the other dogs saved from the fighting ring, due to the archaic BSL still currently in place in our province. Many people fought for these dogs to be destroyed due to their history and the trauma that they had endured at the hands of cruel, vile human beings, who only used them for entertainment and financial gain. They were of the opinion that these dogs were a "lost cause". Thankfully, there were many, many MORE people fought AGAINST these efforts, demanding these dogs be given a chance to be rehabilitated and live the lives they deserved. Unlike the adult dogs rescued from the fighting ring, Maurice was one of the lucky ones – he escaped the horrors of that backyard without ever knowing or being taught how to fight to kill.

After 2 very long years, in July of 2017, the court case ended and unbelievably the accused were found "not guilty" due to a technicality. The good news, though, was that Maurice and the others were permitted to leave the secret facility by a court order. After 2 long years of living in isolation, and finally being given their freedom, they STILL had to leave the province because of the archaic BSL.

Graciously, Dog Tales Rescue and Sanctuary facilitated and funded the transfer of Maurice and a handful of others to a beautiful facility in sunny Florida called Dogs Playing for Life. There, Maurice underwent a detailed behavioral assessment, engaged with humans, and most importantly learned how to socialize with other dogs, and just BE a dog. He quickly stole the hearts of the staff due to his infectious, loving personality.

On a visit to DPFL, 2 volunteers from Paws For Life K9, a rescue organization located in Santa Monica, California, met Maurice and instantly fell in love. They chose Maurice to be the next candidate to travel to Los Angeles to become a member of their prison training program at California State Prison at Lancaster, where he further brushed up on his manners and developed relationships with the amazing trainers at LAC.

Maurice was flourishing and was free of a horrible fate of dogfighting back in Chatham. While he was happy and safe, he was still sadly not living in a home. It was about 6 weeks after his arrival to LA,

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where, on a whim, Sarah decided to go to the No-Kill Los Angeles super adoption event, with her intention being just to play with some puppies. Or so she thought... Amongst hundreds of animals being showcased for adoption through countless rescue organizations, Sarah's path crossed with that of Maurice's. She wasn't sure what it was about this guy, but he instantly captured her attention, and soon after meeting him, her heart. Immediately, she could tell that Maurice was smart, eager to please, and loving. She knew that no matter what sacrifices she needed to make, Maurice was coming home with her!

A few words from Maurice's very special mom: "Maurice, you have lived the most incredible journey and I'm so proud of you and the progress you have made! You have made my life better just by being a part of it and I would not change a single moment of it for the world. I can not imagine my life without you! Thank you to everyone who made our happy union possible. There is no one else that I would rather have hog my bed, share my snacks, and go on adventures with than this guy".

Maurice is thriving. Maurice is loved. Maurice is safe. And if Maurice had stayed in Ontario, he might not be around to be providing this much love to his family today. Please contact your MPP today and demand they move Bill 147 forward to consultation, and finally royal assent.