

House Floor Debate for HB 1519 – Arkansas House of Representatives  
Speaking Against the Bill  
Rep. Aaron Pilkington, Rep. Jim Wooten, Rep. Jimmy Gazaway and Rep.  
Matthew Brown.  
<https://youtu.be/X1e8S-PtZvY>

[GOOGLE GENERATED TRANSCRIPT]

5:57

the bill representative Pilkington you recognized to speak against the bill

6:07

thank you Mr Speaker recently I read a story about a mother of two the just left the hospital after

6:13

being in the ICU and then stable condition she left the hospital with stitches and bite marks all over

6:20

her body after attempting to intervene with her two pit bulls mauled her toddlers to death

6:27

she was severely injured by these dogs and she tried to pull them off her five-month-old boy Hollis Dean and

6:32

two-year-old girl Lily Jane just outside their home in a matter of 10 minutes

6:39

happy home went to one which two small children were laying lifeless covered in

6:44

blood and bite marks dead on the cold Earth as a father of a two-year-old myself and

6:51

a six month old I cannot imagine the pain and anguish that father must have felt holding the

6:57

limp pale bodies of his small children realizing that he failed his most basic

7:03

Duty as a father to children realizing he'd never see them being with joy as they looked up at him

7:09

or hear their Angelic laughter as they played colleagues I rise today to speak against

7:15

this bill because it seeks to remove the local ban on pit bulls and other dangerous breeds in our state and I

7:22

believe this legislation is not in the best interest of our constituents and I urge you all to vote against it

7:28

pit bulls and other dangerous breeds are notorious for their aggressive behaviors and have been responsible for numerous

7:35

attacks on humans and other animals the risks associated with only Pitbull are well documented and it is our duty

7:42

as legislators to protect our communities from harm understand that some will say that pit

7:48

bulls are not inherently dangerous and that with the responsible ownership leash logs and leash laws and

7:55

socializing their dogs properly they can prevent this however we cannot ignore

8:00

the fact that even well-trained pit bulls have been recorded to attack unexpectedly and cause Serious injury

8:07

and death in fact 71 of fatalities due

8:13

to dog attacks in the last decade are from pit bulls the rest are from other dangerous breeds

8:19

this past December in El Paso Arkansas a 10 year old boy was hospitalized and his

8:25

six-year-old brother are injured while they were preventing their little three-year-old sister from being attacked by two whose pit bulls while

8:31

playing outside their Grandma's home Faulkner County a nine-year-old boy

8:37

checking the mailbox was mauled to death by two pit bulls in Bradford Arkansas

8:43

four-year-old little boy Levi Watson was mauled to death by three pit bulls and down south in Hot Springs

8:50

and an older boy 15 years old walking home from school was attacked by a pit

8:55

bull and even locally here in Arkansas in Little Rock here recently a little five-year-old girl

9:02

was attacked and mauled but this is not only kids in my own

9:07

community of Johnson County Sharon Linderman a 75 year old woman was killed by a pit bull

9:14

if this Carnage pain and death is not reason to vote against this bill  
9:21

then I would also let you realize that lifting these bands with an unnecessary burden on our law enforcement agencies

9:27

and amtrol officers because we would have a responsibility to to deal with an increase in football

9:34

related incident and other dangerous breeds

9:39

dealing with pit bulls sometimes is so dangerous with officers that the only way they could de-escalate the situation

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is to denies the dog the dog finally I want to emphasize that

9:51

our state has a responsibility to prioritize the safety and well-being of our citizens and their pets

9:58

and while representative Hawks is that they can do the dangerous dog ban do you realize when he said this he said

10:04

the dog has to attack someone first so we need to have a lifeless dead body

10:10

of a child or an animal until we can act

10:16

I want prevention I want to stop this and this is not a solution

10:23

so that we can help some little special interest group get a win here in Arkansas so with that I say vote no

10:30

against this bill representative Pilkington has spoken against the bill

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13:06

representative Wooten you recognize speak against the bill well

13:14

let me share a couple of things with you first of all this doesn't encourage them

13:21

it prohibits it tells them not to do okay second of all

13:29

City councils again I'm going to repeat this I've said this one down here and

13:34

I'm going to try to laugh and be happy because a lot of you think I'm mad when I'm down here I'm not mad I'm just

13:41

forceful I'm just making a point let me let me share with you these  
City

13:48

councils are elected by their constituents just like we are

13:56

we're getting to the point that we're dictating and telling the cities  
and counties what they can do

14:03

they have to be they're closer to the people than we are

14:09

let them make this decision now let's talk about the constitutionality  
it's constitutional

14:16

until somebody contested and there's 38 of them is represented

14:22

right in the state if I if I backed off every time I got

14:27

threatened to be sued I'd be backing up every day

14:33

I don't worry about that that's not our worry

14:38

they adopt them the 10 year old boy

14:45

that was mauled by a pit bull happened the same week as a BB police

14:51

officer was bald when he went to a home that he was called to because  
of vicious

14:57

dog outside he got there and the dog jumped in and bit him

15:05

my mayor has asked me to vote against this and I'm voting against it

15:11

and I was let the local people take care of

15:16

their business we've been enough to take care of down here but I was  
forcing other things down

15:23

their throat I won't tell you this one more time this does not  
encourage them

15:29

to do it it prohibits them from doing it

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that affects every municipality in this state

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thank you representative Wooten has spoken against the bill

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representative gazaway you recognize speaking against the bill

17:34

thank you Mr Speaker colleagues as you know I don't like to speak against members bills but in this

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instance I I feel somewhat compelled to come down here I have some experience dealing with

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these cases when I was a prosecutor I prosecuted instances where there were

17:55

vicious dog attacks and 201 they were pit bulls I can recall in one specific

18:00

instance where there was a young boy who the pit bull actually left its owner's

18:05

yard busted up inside a person's house and attacked the young boy inside of his

18:12

own home uh grasped onto his leg and they tried to

18:18

beat the dog off of his leg and could not get the dog off of this child's leg the child almost died because it could

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have severed an artery fortunately it didn't uh and I think that dog was

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ultimately euthanized in response to that and several other instances which again 2a1 were pit bulls

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the cities that I represented at the time passed bands on pit bulls and to my

18:43

knowledge they've not been challenged to this day I'll also say that you know with respect

18:48

to the legal challenge of these ordinances I don't know how the record was developed in the lower court and

18:55

what evidence the appellate courts may have had when they looked at the appeals but there is a lot of evidence out there

19:01

that pit bulls are inherently dangerous animals as representative Pilkington mentioned his statistics he had said

19:09

that 71 percent of uh dog bites were attributable to pit bulls now the

19:15

statistics I had and I think that were presented in committee yesterday said that it was 66 percent but one of the things that you have to

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understand I think this would be appropriate to develop a record if these cases were to go upon appeal is that you

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know there's this idea of what's called instinctive or predatory drift in other words dogs are bred in a certain way

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certain certain breeds are bred in a certain way and because of that when they find themselves in a in certain

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situations their instincts kick in and it makes them much more likely to chase much more likely to bite and much more

19:46

likely to bite with the intention to kill and that's exactly how pit bulls have been bred and that's why that they

19:52

account for of all the dog bites the vast majority of dog bites but the thing that's particularly concerning about pit

19:59

bulls is the pounds per square inch that their jaws have are capable of producing when they crush on a human being's limb

20:09

leg neck whatever the case may be they have enormous power in their jaws that

20:14

are capable of producing fatalities in humans and I think that it is an entirely

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reasonable to allow a municipality and you know we talk about local control around here uh all the time we talk

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about it when it suits our purposes typically but if you want to talk about local control I think it's the essence of local control to allow municipalities

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to make this decision to to ban a specific breed now ultimately you know as with everything

20:42

we pass around here there can be legal challenges to it I think the record needs to be developed and I think all of

20:48

the uh research that's out there that suggests that I don't think it just suggests I think it proves that these

20:54

breeds are inherently dangerous they're inherently aggressive they are by their nature capable of producing fatalities

21:01

not like the loss of food that I have my my sweet little dog couldn't kill you if he wanted to and we love the little guy

21:07

but a pit bull can and it makes it particularly concerning and for

that reason I think that we

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would be wrong to tell the municipalities that they can't do this  
let's let me municipalities decide for

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themselves uh in these instances and so with that I would ask you to  
vote no on this Bill thank you

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representative Brown you recognize speak against the bill

27:05

thank you Mr Speaker colleagues uh like representative gazaway I hate  
speaking on some members bill

27:11

but and a lot of what I would say has already been covered by other  
speakers against the bill so I'll just tell a little story just touch  
on represent

27:17

Pilkington on May the 28th 2020 Robbie Taylor which is a name that is

27:22

known in Faulkner County went to go check the mail it was a summer  
vacation he was home with his siblings and his

27:29

mom he asked hey Mom can I go check the mail she said sure So he  
walked down the driveway to check smell

27:34

well he didn't come back after about 15 minutes his mother noticed  
he's been gone for a while so she went look for

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him she found his shoes in the driveway she called 9-1-1

27:46

his 15 year old sister found his body in the field he had been mauled  
to death by two pit

27:51

bulls as a street level lawyer as they call us

27:56

do a little bit of everything and I had the occasion to be involved  
tangently on

28:02

the resulting criminal case that came up and I'd sit in court and  
watch the case

28:07

unfold and I had to look at the pictures of this child this nine-year-  
old boy laying

28:14

down the field with his jugular tore out I had to look at the pictures  
of him on

28:19

the medical examiner's table when he had his autopsy but the most

haunting thing was I heard

28:25

his wife or sorry his mother wailing in the courtroom

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and like representative Pilkington is the father of two young daughters that bothered me usually I'm dealing with insurance or

28:36

banking or real estate the fact of the matter is is that statistics show that pit bulls

28:43

make up only six percent of the dogs in this country getting fatal dog attacks pit bulls are

28:49

responsible for north of 65 percent Rottweilers make up less than two

28:55

percent of the dogs in this country and they're responsible for an additional 10 percent so two dog breeds are responsible for

29:02

three quarters of the fatalities in this country and the numbers just keep increasing

29:07

folks argue that it's not the dogs it's not it's the owners it's bad owners well the two dogs in the Robbie's case

29:16

they had not been abused they were you know taken care of pretty well they were house dogs they were

29:22

family dogs family had small children they got a great they got along great the kids but one day they got out of the fence

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and they snapped and I would say that every Pit Bull is a good dog until one day they're not

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the kids die when they're not we all know the Bloodhounds have been selectively bred to track it's in their

29:43

it's in their nature it's in their DNA Border Collies have been selectively bred to herd it is in their nature it is

29:50

in their DNA pit bulls have been bred for one purpose of one purpose only and that is to fight

29:56

it is in their nature it's in their it is in their biological makeup I know that

30:02

we've had many bills this session where local municipalities and governments have overstepped the mark in terms of

30:09

Regulation and we had to come back and say hey guys that's not appropriate we're going to take that power away from you



30:14

but I think the ability of Committee of communities that are affected by dogs like this to put in regulations if they

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choose I don't think that's overstepping the Mark I think that's being responsible to your community there was mention about the court

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challenges well the legal standard is is there a rational basis for the breed ban

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is there a rational relationship between the harm you seek that the government seeks to avoid and it's police power to ensure the

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safety of the public health safety and Welfare and I believe that those withstand those challenges in other states and that will

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stand it here if as representative we mentioned a proper record is made every court case is different

30:49

but to me there's something fundamentally wrong where the associations that promote pit bulls even warn owners when you take your dogs out

30:56

you must take a break stick with you because if your dog does stamp and

31:01

latches on to a kid or lashes onto a dog you have to use this stick to be a responsible owner you must have this

31:07

club to loosen your dog and I would close with this one thing

31:12

else I found in my research last night as I was looking into this and I've been enjoy the

31:18

back and forth at represent Richmond representative Barry have about the Marines versus the Air Force but one

31:23

thing that surprised me is that one thing that the Army the Air Force and the Marine Corps all three agree on is

31:29

we do not let pit bulls on our base housing the Armed Forces see the problem I think

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municipality should be able to have the same rights and therefore I'd encourage a no vote on the bill

31:42

represent Brown has spoken against the bill