



NEWS RELEASE

Contra Costa County

SUPERVISOR **JOHN GIOIA** (joy-a), District One

SUPERVISOR **MARK DeSAULNIER**, District Four

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 21, 2005

Supervisors want restrictions against ex-felons from owning large or dangerous dogs

What: Supervisors take action to prohibit ex-felons from owning dangerous dogs

Where: Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors

Board Chambers

651 Pine Street

Martinez, CA

When: **Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

Approximately 10:30 a.m.

MARTINEZ, Calif., At the Board of Supervisors meeting on October 25th, Supervisors John Gioia and Mark DeSaulnier are introducing a new County law, which would ban anyone who's been convicted of a felony from owning large or aggressive dogs.

"These aggressive, uncontrollable dogs roam the streets and terrorize residents and children," said Supervisor Gioia. "That's wrong. No one should feel trapped in their home because they're afraid they're going to be attacked by a dog."

Contra Costa County District Attorney Bob Kochly worked with Supervisors DeSaulnier and Gioia to develop this new law. "A dog with the potential for criminal or negligent misuse by a convicted felon can be even more dangerous than an unloaded, inoperable gun," said Kochly.

Under the non-breed specific proposal, anyone who's been convicted of a felony would be banned from owning a dog that weighs 20 pounds or more, has been cited for at least two unprovoked attacks against a person or another dog within three-years, or has inflicted serious injury against a person or has even killed another animal within 36 months. Ex-felons who want to own a dog they believe is harmless, may file a petition with the County's Animal Services Department for review.

"We should not allow felons to own dogs that can be trained to attack, maim or even kill another living being," said Supervisor DeSaulnier.

The issue of dog mauling in Contra Costa County garnered nationwide attention in 2001 when 10-year-old Shawn Jones was viciously attacked by two pit bulls in Richmond.

Recent attacks in Concord and Pittsburg have raised the need to pass tougher laws on aggressive dogs. This past May, for example, a guide dog in training and his handler were attacked by a pitt bull at the Bart station in Pittsburg. That case was referred to San Francisco Animal Control because both the pitt bull and the owner are from that city.

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