



Council of Docked Breeds

PRESS RELEASE

12th May 2001

‘Think dog’ on Election day, urges CDB

The Council of Docked Breeds is urging its members to quiz election candidates about key canine issues in the run-up to polling on June 7th.

European threats to dog ownership and the proposed hunting ban should be at the forefront of dog owners’ minds when the would-be politicians come knocking, says the lobbying group. It has posted election guidance on its website at www.cdb.org and is urging electors to make candidates of all parties ‘think dog’.

“We are strictly non-party political, but in the crucial four weeks before the election we want politicians of all hues to be bombarded by dog owners and breeders with questions which will get them to think exactly where they stand on key issues,” said CDB President Peter Squires.

The CDB is urging candidates to

- Oppose British accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals, which threatens over 100 dog breeds
- Resist any moves to legislate against specific dog breeds
- Oppose any new anti-Hunting Bill which impinges upon the rights and freedoms of ordinary dog owners

In addition, the CDB website will allow internet users to direct questions straight to the main political parties campaigning for seats at Westminster.

“Whether it is the extension of bureaucracy from Europe or the home-grown intolerance of the Hunting Bill, these are the issues on which dog owners can influence candidates’ opinions. I call on all of our supporters to speak or write to their candidates, question their intentions, and make sure they really do ‘think dog’,” said Peter Squires.

Visit www.cdb.org for constantly updated election pages with links to all the major political parties.

- ends -

For further information contact Ginette Elliott on 01255 830993 or Graham Downing on 01206 263234.

Notes for Editors

The Council of Docked Breeds is offering the following election guidance to members:

UK General Election 2001

The UK Prime Minister has called the General Election for June 7 2001. This is a great chance for dog owners to express their views and influence future government policy in the UK.

Candidates from all the political parties will be seeking your vote. They will write to you. They may hold meetings in the area where you live. They or their party representatives may even visit your home.

The Council of Docked Breeds is not a party political organisation, nor does it presume to tell you who to vote for, but if the tail docking option is to continue, then we need as many MPs as possible in the House of Commons who understand the benefits of this simple animal husbandry procedure.

- **We must also make it very clear to anti-docking MPs that their position will lose them votes - particularly in marginal rural constituencies. If YOU care about the future of your breed, you must play a part.**

We would ask you to bear in mind the following issues when talking or writing to those seeking your vote:

European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals

This international treaty calls on member states to drastically alter breed standards or to prohibit the breeding of many of our most cherished dogs. To date, the UK has not signed or ratified the Convention and has no legal requirement to do so. In 2000, some animal welfare bodies lobbied for the UK Government to sign and ratify the Convention, and the matter remains under consideration by the Home Office.

The CDB believes that, given the high standards of animal welfare in the UK, British accession to the European Convention is unnecessary. Furthermore it threatens over 100 dog breeds.

- **Please ask candidates that, if elected, they would oppose the UK signing and ratifying the Convention and in particular if they support the continuation of tail docking.**

More information on the European Convention can be [found here](#).

Breed-Specific legislation

New laws enacted in Germany during 2000 have singled out 16 dog breeds, including all the Bull breeds, for an outright ban or severe restriction. Owners have been forced to muzzle their dogs and have them sterilised. The German authorities have attempted to make other European Union member states follow their lead and have these breeds restricted throughout Europe.

The CDB supports German dog owners in their fight against this oppressive legislation. In Britain, the Dangerous Dogs Act was introduced to curb so-called 'fighting breeds'. It was universally recognised as bad law.

- **Please ask your candidate if they will resist any further moves to ban or restrict particular dog breeds.**

Hunting Ban

The Labour Government introduced a 'Hunting Options Bill' which, if ever passed in the way the House of Commons preferred, would ban hunting with dogs in England & Wales. Irrespective of its effect on traditional fox hunting, the Bill also threatened ordinary dog owners

The offence of hunting applies to a single dog. This, coupled with the lack of a need for the prosecutor to prove intention to hunt, makes it much more likely to catch the innocent dog-walker whose dog chases or searches for a hare despite commands from its owner to the contrary.

A dog let off a lead may find a scent, even though the quarry is nowhere to be seen. If the dog follows the scent, it would be searching for, or "hunting", mammals with the full consent and approval of the owner.

At its most extreme the Bill would criminalise all people walking their dogs off the lead in areas where the dog is likely to try to find any wild mammal, whether or not the dog found or chased a

mammal. Under the Bill, the penalty for hunting is a fine of £5,000, and convicted individuals may have to forfeit their dogs which may subsequently be destroyed.

The CDB opposes ANY legislation which intrudes upon the rights of ordinary dog owners, and which has damaging implications for dogs and their welfare.

- **Please ask your candidate if they realise the above implications of the Bill to ban Hunting with Dogs placed before Parliament in its last Session and if elected, would they oppose any similar legislation in the future.**

Write to or email all Prospective Parliamentary Candidates in your constituency. Let them know how important animal welfare is to you and many of your friends in their constituency. Ask each candidate how they would vote on the above issues and make it clear that your vote depends on their reply.