

## Working dog docking exemption not workable

**14<sup>th</sup> March 2006 for immediate release**

The third reading of the Animal Welfare Bill took place on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> March, and 88% of MPs voted in favour of a ban on tail docking with an exemption for certain working dogs. The Animal Welfare Bill now passes to the House of Lords.

“The Council of Docked Breeds (CDB) is in a unique position as it is the only organisation which has been working very closely with docking vets since 1991 and has fully gained their trust by offering them complete confidentiality,” said Peter Squires, President of the CDB.

“The majority of docking vets have told us that if they have to issue certification that they have docked a litter, they will simply cease docking. Their governing body, the RCVS already takes vets to a Disciplinary Hearing, accusing them of ‘disgraceful professional conduct’ if they obtain documentary evidence that they have legally docked a puppy under current legislation.”

The CDB feels that any increase in paperwork which the RCVS can use as evidence is simply too risky. The RCVS has wanted to ban tail docking for over thirty years. They stepped up their resistance to docking when it became a vet only procedure and are not now in a position to retract their unfounded disdain for the practice.

“The vote for docking to be reduced to a working dog only procedure, will have the same result as an outright ban, or drive it underground in the working dog arena, which is not in the best interest of animal welfare. Breeds which are at the same level of risk as working dogs but not worked, have been totally ignored by this decision and many experienced breeders will simply stop breeding if forced to expose their animals to painful tail damage” continued Squires

“MPs discussed how their own sniffer dogs damage their tails checking out the Commons for explosives and the same will happen to other dogs not worked in the field. The huge vote in favour shows that MPs accept that the procedure is necessary, but confined the exemption to too small a number of individual dogs. We now hope that the Lords can continue the good work of the many MPs who spoke eloquently in the debate and conclude that the status quo is the only option which will truly protect the future welfare of our breeds in total.” he concluded.

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