



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB<sup>SM</sup>

April 22, 2009

Dear AKC Club Members:

A bill has been introduced in the New York General Assembly that could have serious implications for every responsible purebred dog breeder or owner throughout the United States.

If allowed to pass, NY Assembly Bill 7218 would:

- Outlaw tail docking in the state of New York.
- Render anyone who exhibits a dog with a docked tail in New York subject to a misdemeanor charge punishable with a fine up to \$500 –regardless of whether the exhibitor is a New York resident.
- Allow any New York “animal rights” organization to sue a violator for declaratory judgment via a private right of action.

This bill must alarm all who value the right of the dog community to determine breed standards, regardless of whether your breed has a docked tail. As you know, the standards are set by the AKC parent clubs, recognized experts in a particular breed whose goal is to protect the health and welfare of the breed and preserve the function for which it was bred. The standards are set by these experts with the best interest of the dogs in mind, and not with solely aesthetic motivations.

A. 7218 is sending a clear message that the government—and not you as dog owners—wants to determine the best care and conditions for your breed. Allowing this bill to pass would set a dangerous precedent of allowing the government to usurp your right to establish breed standards and allow radical organizations to dictate who may or may not exhibit at our events. Please visit the AKC website, [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org), or contact the AKC Government Relations Department at (919) 816-3720 to learn how you can help us stop this legislation.

We believe that the AKC bears a special responsibility to support our Parent Clubs to protect our cherished and functional breed standards. The AKC, along with its New York federation, has already begun taking extensive actions to stop A. 7218, but it will take a strong, collaborative effort to succeed. Please join us in standing up for the health and welfare of our dogs, as well as our rights as responsible dog owners, and call, email or write to members of the New York Assembly Agriculture Committee to oppose Assembly Bill 7218.

Sincerely,

Sheila Goffe  
Director of Government Relations

**(NY Resident Sample Letter)**

The Honorable (name)  
New York State Assembly  
LOB \_\_\_\_\_  
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Chairman Magee:

OR

Dear Assemblyman or Assemblywoman \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing you today because I understand that A. 7218, a bill to ban tail docking of dogs has been assigned to the New York Assembly Agriculture Committee. As a dog owner and a constituent, I would like to express my opposition to government regulation of this issue, which is best left to owners and their veterinarians.

*(Personalize here – tell about yourself as a dog owner, breeder and fancier. What breeds have you owned or shown? Have any of your dogs achieved a Championship? Won a prestigious award? How do you as a responsible dog owner contribute to your community? Have you participated in Responsible Dog Ownership Day Activities? Presented material on dogs to your local school?)*

Tail docking is a standard, accepted practice for more than 50 breeds of dogs recognized by the American Kennel Club. Tails are docked on breeds that are active in the field when those puppies are generally less than 5 days old and when the tails bones and nervous system are not yet fully formed. Pain if any, is momentary, but this procedure will prevent painful, serious injury later in life. For docked breeds, an intact tail at full-length would result in injured and bloodied tails when the dogs perform the functions for which they were bred. Any inference that these procedures are unnecessary is a severe mischaracterization that connotes a lack of respect and knowledge of history and the function of purebred dogs.

The criminalization of tail docking embodied in A 7218 penalizes responsible dog owners for taking appropriate, safe, action to avoid long-term, painful injuries to the dogs they love and care for. Owners, in close consultation with their veterinarians—not the government—should make informed decisions about their pets' health care.

I respectfully urge you to oppose A. 7218 when it comes before you in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

Sincerely,

John Smith  
1234 Main Street  
New York, NY 10016

**(NY Nationwide Sample Letter)**

The Honorable (name)  
New York State Assembly  
LOB \_\_\_\_\_  
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Chairman Magee:

OR

Dear Assemblyman or Assemblywoman \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing you today because I understand that A. 7218, a bill to ban tail docking of dogs has been assigned to the New York Assembly Agriculture Committee. As a dog owner and a frequent visitor to your state to show my dogs, I would like to express my opposition to government regulation of this issue, which is best left to owners and their veterinarians.

*(Personalize here— Please add information about New York events in which you have participated or are planning to participate. If you have an estimate of the money you spent, please include that.)*

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