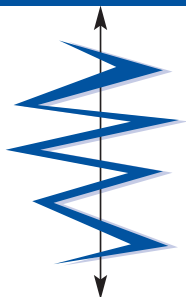


DISAGREE



Diplomatically

9

Tips for
expressing
differences
of opinion in
the public
policy arena



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM

It's easy to get frustrated

when your lawmakers seem to be doing the exact opposite of what you'd like them to do, or when another interest group is supporting legislation which works directly against your interests and beliefs.



At first glance,

their opinions may appear groundless or misinformed.

But,

while you may not always agree with all proposals for the policies governing you, the following tips may help you handle these disagreements more productively and, ultimately, gain respect for your opinions on issues of canine legislation.

TRY TO REMEMBER:

1. Your lawmakers are trying to do the right thing.

2. Laws are proposed and passed to solve problems.

3. If you want a solution that does not involve a new law, be prepared to help.

They just may not have the same base of knowledge or expertise about dogs that you do. Instead of chastising them, try educating them. If your facts are convincing, you may persuade your lawmaker that your way is the “right” way.

By the time a law gets proposed, the lawmaker has already been convinced that the problem exists. At this point, it may be too late to convince your lawmaker to do nothing, or that there really is not a “problem” at all.

Instead, try suggesting a different “solution” to the problem. Your approach doesn’t even have to



involve a law—for example, education is a good way to address problems involving irresponsible dog ownership.

After all, if the government isn’t going to solve the problem, someone else will have to. And who better than you (or your club) to deal with an issue that you know so much about, and to make sure things are done your way? You can begin these volunteer services while the proposal is still under consideration. Such

initiative will convince your lawmakers that (a) you are serious about your offer to help, and (b) the job will actually get done.

It's never safe to assume that all proposals which are not in the best interests of dog fanciers are the same, nor is it safe to assume that what you read in your newspaper is an accurate description of the law. Even similar types of legislation often have different wording which makes them very different when enacted.

You need to know what you're dealing with, because without all the facts, it's hard to make a convincing argument. Having a

specific understanding of the reasons for and content of the proposal will help you to put together a rational, complete response to it. Reading the proposal and knowing the details will also alert you to the issues that your opposition most wants to address, which may help you come up with some more acceptable alternative solutions.

Listen carefully and respectfully to all speakers during public meetings. Don't let bad manners undermine your credibility.

4. Be sure to understand the proposal.

Don't just tell your government that their proposal won't work – tell them what will.

5. Rudeness never wins respect.

6. Never raise your voice or lose your cool.

No one wants to listen to someone rant and rave, no matter how good their ideas may be.

7. Avoid threats.

Threats immediately put people on the defensive and close their minds to what you are saying. To get your opinions heard and respected, you want to get people to listen to you.

8. Always back up your positions with facts.

When you disagree, explain why. For example: "I know some people think that breeders only breed their dogs to make money and get rich, but my experiences as a breeder and show judge of 15 years have shown me that



this is most often not the case. Responsible breeders breed to the standard and for the betterment of their breed, and are not motivated solely by profit."

9. Keep your focus on the ideas, and not on the people presenting them.

Personality criticisms appear petty or vindictive to the casual observer, and can damage your own credibility as much as your target's. Be careful not to let personal attacks distract from the merits of your position.

Remember, actions speak louder than words.

**THE AKC
SUPPORTS YOUR
LEGISLATIVE
ENDEAVORS.**

THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB MISSION STATEMENT:

**MAINTAIN A REGISTRY FOR PUREBRED DOGS AND
PRESERVE ITS INTEGRITY.**



**SANCTION DOG EVENTS THAT PROMOTE INTEREST IN, AND
SUSTAIN THE PROCESS OF, BREEDING FOR TYPE AND
FUNCTION OF PUREBRED DOGS.**



**TAKE WHATEVER ACTIONS NECESSARY TO PROTECT AND
ASSURE THE CONTINUATION OF THE SPORT
OF PUREBRED DOGS.**

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