

Remillie Norsworthy
Chapman
LD 133

I oppose LD 133 or any other amendment to Laws Regarding Nuisance Dogs. As the daughter of a former “dog catcher” for the Town of Presque Isle, I know that there are already adequate ordinances for dealing with canine nuisances, including reports of excessive barking, which I have been led to understand is the primary cause of this proposal. Lack of enough personnel to address complaints is already a problem, and will not improve by amending existing laws.

As an owner of at least 2 dogs at a time since 1984, I am well aware that dogs bark for many reasons, such as when they detect a human or animal intruder; when they are afraid; when they are in physical distress, including needing to relieve bladder or bowels or experiencing thirst or hunger; when they are bored in confinement (and likely poorly exercised mentally and physically); and, of course, to get attention. None of these is the dog's fault. If my dogs bark, I make it my immediate business to find out why and correct the issue.

It is up to the owner/handler to determine the cause of barking—or find someone able to help do so--and then to take steps to address the dog's concerns, comfort, and physical and mental well-being. This includes becoming the pack leader whom the dog can learn to trust to deal with any concerning situations. It is further up to the human to provide education and conditioning through training and exercise. No amendment can address these types of responsibility.

The laws we have now address abuse or neglect that could be causes of excessive barking. However, no law can enforce common sense in a human, as we well know, but that's what it takes to train a dog. Training, of human and dog, is the key to correcting unwanted behaviors. Towns can post contacts for entities and informational websites that can assist with training. Libraries can obtain and spotlight books and magazines on training. Complainants can be encouraged to offer to assist in training the dog or to arrange to visit with it during a long lonely day without its humans. Assistance, rather than legal penalty, is the appropriate response to most barking situations.