

## Big Talk With Bruce Dickey - Ledy VanKavage

March 22, 2021

54:46 | <https://youtu.be/eDjFLJWDUR4?t=3286>

On March 22, Ledy VanKavage, a lobbyist for Best Friends Animal Society, **falsely claimed** to Bruce Dickey that the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2020-2021 forced the Department of Defense to eliminate long standing breed-specific policies within military divisions. The U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Air Force have [banned a small group of dangerous dog breeds](#) from military housing—chiefly pit bulls, rottweilers and wolf-dog hybrids—for over a decade.

The final language of the reconciled NDAA that President Trump signed into law **did not contain a “breed-neutral” mandate**. Clearly, VanKavage, a top paid lobbyist for pit bull causes, never bothered to read the reconciled version of the Act. This is a failure of due diligence on her part. The removal of the “breed-neutral” mandate was in part due to advocacy by Responsible Citizens for Public Safety ([RC4PS.org](#)) and DogsBite.org.<sup>1</sup> Learn more about the founder of RC4PS.org, Ann Marie Rogers, [in an editorial she wrote](#) in our series: *Perspectives of Advocates*.

Attached is the reconciled version of the NDAA that was signed into law.

### **THE BELOW IS FALSE AND A FAILURE OF DUE DILIGENCE**

**Ledy VanKavage:** *“Another exciting thing is the military Authorization Act that um President Trump vetoed, but they overrode it. Basically has a provision that the Department of Defense has to promulgate rules that allow dogs on bases and they won't be able to discriminate against breeds anymore.”*

**Bruce Dickey:** *“Oh really?”*

**Ledy VanKavage:** *“Yes. So that was a huge victory, and um that we've worked many years on. And yeah and so they're supposed to promulgate the rules and regulations by March 31st. Um, I was just on a call with Senator Duckworth's office on Friday and they haven't seen any proposed regs yet, so she is sending an on-demand letter asking them to do it in time.”*

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<sup>1</sup> RE: National Dog Bite Victims' Organization Opposes NDAA Provision that Eliminates Breed Safety Policies in Military Housing, DogsBite.org, October 7, 2020. (<https://blog.dogsbite.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/house-ndaa-breed-policies-dogsbiteorg.pdf>)

## Language Signed into Law

SEC. 2884. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POLICY FOR REGULATION IN MILITARY COMMUNITIES OF DANGEROUS DOGS KEPT AS PETS.

(a) POLICY REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall establish a uniform policy for the regulation of dangerous dogs kept as pets in military communities.

(b) CONSULTATION.—The policy required by subsection (a) shall be developed in consultation with professional veterinary and animal behavior experts in regard to effective regulation of dangerous dogs kept as pets.

(c) REGULATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall prescribe regulations implementing the policy established under subsection (a).

(2) BEST PRACTICES.—The regulations prescribed under paragraph (1) shall include strategies, for implementation within all military communities, for the prevention of dog bites that are consistent with the following best practices:

(A) Enforcement of regulations relating to dangerous dogs kept as pets, with emphasis on identification of dangerous dog behavior and chronically irresponsible pet owners.

(B) Enforcement of animal control regulations, such as leash laws and stray animal control policies.

(C) Promotion and communication of resources for pet spaying and neutering.

## Pre-Reconciliation

~~SEC. 2863. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POLICY FOR REGULATION OF DANGEROUS DOGS IN MILITARY COMMUNITIES.~~

~~(a) POLICY REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, through the Veterinary Service Activity of the Department of Defense, shall establish a standardized policy applicable across all military communities for the regulation of dangerous dogs that is—~~

~~(1) breed neutral; and~~

~~———(2) consistent with advice from professional veterinary and animal behavior experts in regard to effective regulation of dangerous dogs.~~

~~(b) REGULATIONS.—~~

~~(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall prescribe regulations implementing the policy established under subsection (a).~~

~~(2) BEST PRACTICES.—The regulations prescribed under paragraph (1) shall include strategies, for implementation within all military communities, for the prevention of dog bites that are consistent with the following best practices:~~

~~(A) Enforcement of comprehensive, nonbreed-specific regulations relating to dangerous dogs, with emphasis on identification of dangerous dog behavior and chronically irresponsible owners.~~

~~(B) Enforcement of animal control regulations, such as leash laws and stray animal control policies.~~

~~(C) Promotion and communication of resources for pet spaying and neutering.~~

1 this section, including a description and assessment of the  
2 effect of the taking into account of the considerations  
3 specified in this section on particular basing decisions in  
4 the United States during the one-year period ending on  
5 the date of the briefing.

6 (j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7 (1) The term “covered military unit” means a  
8 unit of the Armed Forces whose initial assignment  
9 to a military installation or relocation from a mili-  
10 tary installation to a different military installation  
11 requires the preparation of an environmental impact  
12 statement in accordance with the National Environ-  
13 mental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

14 (2) The term “major headquarters” means the  
15 headquarters of a unit of the Armed Forces or com-  
16 mand that is the appropriate command of a general  
17 officer or flag officer.

18 **SEC. 2884. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POLICY FOR REGU-**  
19 **LATION IN MILITARY COMMUNITIES OF DAN-**  
20 **GEROUS DOGS KEPT AS PETS.**

21 (a) POLICY REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after  
22 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of  
23 Defense shall establish a uniform policy for the regulation  
24 of dangerous dogs kept as pets in military communities.

1 (b) CONSULTATION.—The policy required by sub-  
2 section (a) shall be developed in consultation with profes-  
3 sional veterinary and animal behavior experts in regard  
4 to effective regulation of dangerous dogs kept as pets.

5 (c) REGULATIONS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days  
7 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
8 retary of Defense shall prescribe regulations imple-  
9 menting the policy established under subsection (a).

10 (2) BEST PRACTICES.—The regulations pre-  
11 scribed under paragraph (1) shall include strategies,  
12 for implementation within all military communities,  
13 for the prevention of dog bites that are consistent  
14 with the following best practices:

15 (A) Enforcement of regulations relating to  
16 dangerous dogs kept as pets, with emphasis on  
17 identification of dangerous dog behavior and  
18 chronically irresponsible pet owners.

19 (B) Enforcement of animal control regula-  
20 tions, such as leash laws and stray animal con-  
21 trol policies.

22 (C) Promotion and communication of re-  
23 sources for pet spaying and neutering.

24 (D) Investment in community education  
25 initiatives, such as teaching criteria for pet se-

1           lection, pet care best practices, owner respon-  
2           sibilities, and safe and appropriate interaction  
3           with dogs.

4           (d) EXCLUSIONS.—This section does not apply with  
5           respect to military working dogs and any dog certified as  
6           a service animal.

7           (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8           (1) The term “dangerous dog” means a dog  
9           that—

10                   (A) has attacked a person or another ani-  
11                   mal without justification, causing injury or  
12                   death to the person or animal; or

13                   (B) exhibits behavior that reasonably sug-  
14                   gests the likely risk of such an attack.

15           (2) The term “military communities” means—

16                   (A) all military installations; and

17                   (B) all military housing, including  
18                   privatized military housing under subchapter IV  
19                   of chapter 169 of title 10, United States Code.

20           **TITLE XXIX—OVERSEAS CONTIN-**  
21           **GENY OPERATIONS MILI-**  
22           **TARY CONSTRUCTION**

Sec. 2901. Authorized Navy construction and land acquisition projects.

Sec. 2902. Authorized Air Force construction and land acquisition projects.

Sec. 2903. Authorization of appropriations.