



March 15, 2018

Seán W. McCarthy
President
The Westminster Kennel Club

Via e-mail: info@westminsterkennelclub.org

Dear Mr. McCarthy,

I'm writing on behalf of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), the world's largest animal-protection organization, and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide, to ask that the Westminster Kennel Club follow the lead of the U.K.'s Kennel Club, which ahead of this year's Crufts dog show warned judges not to award animals who were bred to have exaggerated features. The Kennel Club reminded the judges of brachycephalic breeds and that "all dogs should have open nostrils" in order to ensure that they "are not suffering in any way." May we please hear that you will **adopt the same mandate for the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show?**

Crufts has not been broadcast by the BBC or endorsed by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in **10 years**, because dogs bred to have exaggerated features suffer from disabilities, deformities, and diseases to which they are genetically predisposed. Since a German shepherd with an abnormally sloped back and painful, deformed gait was awarded "best in breed" in 2016, The Kennel Club has taken steps to prevent the awarding of dogs who are suffering from breed-specific congenital health problems.

The aesthetic standards of the American Kennel Club can leave dogs crippled and in near-constant pain and may even lead to an untimely death. An [article](#) in *Time* magazine estimates that as many as one in four purebred dogs is afflicted with a serious genetic problem. Please prohibit Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show judges from awarding dogs who have features and characteristics that cause them to suffer, such as brachycephalic dogs with breathing problems, large dogs and others with sloping backs or disproportionately short legs with musculoskeletal problems, and those who have been bred to have unnaturally shaped skulls and are suffering from debilitating syringomyelia.

Humans are responsible for creating and perpetuating dog breeds. It's our responsibility to mitigate the suffering that we have caused. Please do the right thing by preventing judges from awarding dogs who suffer because breeders choose aesthetic standards over the animals' health.

Thank you for your consideration. We hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

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