



April 4, 2024

Donald G. Sturz
President and Show Chair
Westminster Kennel Club

Via e-mail: dsturz@westminsterkennelclub.org

Dear Mr. Sturz:

I'm writing to urge you to prohibit dachshunds and breathing-impaired breeds (BIB)—such as pugs, French bulldogs, and Cavalier King Charles spaniels—from competing in this year's Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.

Dachshunds have been intentionally bred to have a long spine and stubby legs, which often causes them to suffer from herniated discs, malformations of the intervertebral discs and joint pain in their crooked legs. Due to these painful deformities, Germany has proposed banning breeding the dogs. A Cornell University veterinarian recently said that "the miniature dachshund is the most likely breed to have an intervertebral disc displacement and ... multiple com[e] in for surgery every week."

As we've shared with your predecessor, many French bulldogs, pugs, and other flat-faced breeds can barely breathe—let alone go for a walk or chase a ball—without gasping for air, because they have been bred to have restricted airways. They suffer from a multitude of health problems due to their deliberately distorted airways, which often shortens their lives and leads to countless congenital ailments, most notably the constant struggle just to breathe, which is apparent in the panting, snorting, and wheezing common among BIBs. A recently proposed bill in New Hampshire shows that legislators take this issue seriously. It's only a matter of time before laws are passed in the U.S. to regulate certain breeding practices since the dog-breeding industry has failed to do so and hasn't curbed the breeding of dogs with painful and life-threatening deformities.

Promoting these intentionally deformed dogs in the Westminster dog show misleads viewers into believing that their appearance and underlying, life-threatening ailments are something to be celebrated. Year after year, this creates more demand for dogs who suffer immensely throughout their lifetime and often need costly medical care that their guardians may not be aware of or cannot afford. The deformities compromise their health, quality of life, and emotional welfare.

From an ethical standpoint, adopting a dog is obviously greatly preferable to purposely breeding yet another individual into a nation whose shelters are overflowing with homeless animals. So removing breeds prone to lifetimes of deformity and suffering from your highly publicized event would be the least that your club should do. We ask for your consideration for dogs' sake. Thank you. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

PEOPLE FOR
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Sincerely,

Elise Fisher

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Evidence Analyst

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