

# Exotic pet law makes no sense

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Editor:

I am not a reptile, spider, or other creepy, crawly fan. When I see a spider on the floor, I run away or grab the nearest shoe. Therefore, it is very fitting that one of my school assignments would be to attend a town council meeting and report on an issue, and that the issue would be about reptiles and other exotic animals. To say the least, I was not thrilled with this assignment.

The issue at hand was whether or not the town of Payson should create more regulations for people who want to own certain exotic pets. The new law would mean that there would be a fee to buy an exotic pet; prospective pet purchasers would also need to become educated about their pet and pass a home inspection. This seemed like a pretty good idea to me. At first.

But being at the meeting and hearing Shannon, exotic pet shop owner, speak about the statistics of exotic pet attacks versus dog attacks, made me realize something very important. If, according to Shannon, a person is 400 times more likely to be killed by a horse than by an exotic animal, and if state regulations already restrict the purchase of big cats, bears, crocodiles and poisonous reptiles/arachnids, why are we creating more regulations against exotic pets? If 4.7 million dog attacks are reported every year, many on the general public and not on the owner of the dog, and none of the few cases of constrictor attacks have affected the public, does this law seem fair to you?

I hear a lot about dogs that are abused, underfed, and forced into the cruel sport of dog fighting. But I have never heard of reptile fighting. Which owners do you think need more regulation?

We need to stop and think about why this law is being passed. Is it being passed because exotic animals are a large threat to society? Or is it being passed because the general public simply doesn't like snakes and spiders?

Statistically, this law makes no sense, and further regulation of horses or dogs seems like a more pressing issue to me. But the general public likes dogs much more than snakes and lizards.

Furthermore, the council approved the regulation without first determining the amount of the fee. Is this the right way to pass a regulation?

Karen Williams

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