



One Dog At A Time

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The Right Honourable O'Connor-Connolly,

I trust this letter finds you well.

I would like to raise concerns as to a variety of issues that will need to be addressed with the new restrictions in the United States. As of 1<sup>st</sup> August, any dog entering the United States of America will have to be at least 6 months old.

As the President of ODAAT, I am very concerned as to the implications organisations such as mine, the Humane Society and CARE will face unless action is taken by the Government of the Cayman Islands.

90% of the dogs we rescue are under 6 months old. 20% are adopted on island, with the remainder flying to the US where they are adopted. Currently the pups can fly when they are 12 weeks old. They travel to one of our rescue partners and are immediately placed in their forever homes. With the new US legislation these pups will have to stay on island a further 4 months.

The pups we rescue are from a variety of sources; the DOA, abandoned on the streets of Cayman, surrendered with their momma just before or after they are born... With the volume of animals we rescue, sometimes with 3 or 4 litters at the same time, to have to keep them all until they are six months old is something that we cannot do.

As a charity, we do not have the facilities to house them for six months, as well as feeding them, the puppies will need to have had all their vaccinations and be fixed prior to leaving our island. We currently have no government funding and rely on the community and ourselves to organise events so we can pay for the dogs we rescue. We are a foster based rescue so desperately need land to set up a sanctuary where the puppies and dogs we rescue are safe until such times they get adopted or can fly.

In addition to this, it means that the Caymanian people and the residents, if there were to be a hurricane, will be unable to take their puppies, if under six months old, into the

USA. What will happen to the puppies then? They will be abandoned and left to fend for themselves and, if unfixed, will lead to a population boom. If one dog produces 10, healthy puppies, the females could become pregnant from around 8-10 months old. If those pups then each have 10 puppies, the situation will easily become out of control. As a charity, we do not want to see animals needlessly killed due to irresponsible owners who allow their dogs to walk the streets and then expect charities to deal with the issue of 'unexpected' puppies.

We urge you, as Leader of our prosperous country, to assist in ensuring that:

1. Breeders are fully regulated (they will have to keep pups too if they normally export them to the USA);
2. House and yard dogs are spayed or neutered to prevent unwanted pregnancies and babies
3. Stray dogs are fixed by the DOA if captured
4. Homeowners with unspayed or unneutered dogs should be given government assistance if they do not fall under the specifications required by CARE or the Humane Society to be eligible for discounted or free treatment
5. NPO's are allowed to apply for funding to assist in the spay and neuter treatment of stray and community dogs
6. Overpopulation of dogs does not occur by introducing mandatory microchipping so owners can be identified

With this ban on exporting dogs under six months approaching imminently, the Cayman Islands Government must take action.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Johnston

President of One Dog at a Time