

Panel declines to ban pit bulls

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HELENA, Mont. (AP) A proposal to ban pit bull dogs in [Montana](#) was quickly rejected today by the Legislature, amid criticism it was an ineffective way to deal with the problem of dog attacks.

The plan would have allowed the current owners of pit bulls to register their dog and keep it, but no other pit bulls could be purchased or bred in the state. There would be certain exceptions for dog shows.

Critics sharply criticized the proposal; and the House Local Government Committee rejected it on a voice vote about an hour after hearing from dozens of opponents.

Lawmakers began discussing the possibility of a substitute plan to increase penalties on the owners of vicious dogs, although no firm initiatives were in place for such a bill.

By AP Writer Matt Gouras (Copyright 2009 by The Associated Press. All Rights Reserved.) APNP 01-22-09 1925CST