

# **I Got Your Back**

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Currently in Virginia, there is a concern that the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) is taking a path that is going to affect the ability of people to hunt with dogs. So what does this have to do with me, a Sheltie person? Simple, what affects one group will eventually trickle down to the rest of us. You see, in the eyes of the animal rights fanatics, we are all wrong. Therefore, they go after the thing that will get them the most sympathy from the masses that are easily swayed. One of the things often targeted is hunting. Even if you in other areas of the dog fancy are not hunters, we need to protect their rights, lest we lose our own.

Let us look at one way the Animal Rights (AR) movement works. Briefly, they know how to work emotions, lobby legislators, target things that many humans might find offensive (hunting) and work that factor. The AR movement relies on the fact that humans are emotional and will often not seek to find the other side of the story. For example, there are no real natural predators for deer in many regions. Deer populations are exploding in the suburbs. What happens when the natural environment cannot support the numbers (think winter)? What happens when our gardens go dormant and provide no more food for an abnormally high population? What about health (various diseases) and safety risks (car vs. deer) to us an abnormal overpopulation of deer adapting to the suburbs presents. According to a Freerepublic.com article from several years ago, in Fairfax County, VA, there were over 40,000 deer living in county parks. For those of you not familiar with Fairfax County, it is a densely populated, Washington, DC suburban area. The AR movement does not really care about this. However, I am not going to digress into a debate about hunting, I am going to impress upon you why those of us non-hunters who do other activities with our dogs **MUST** have the backs of hunters who use dogs.

Supposed the AR movement gets hunting with dogs banned or heavily restricted. Well, and this is no stretch, trust me here, I have had personal dealings for years with AR fanatics, next in line may be herding. At its basics, herding is a modified hunt. The sheep or ducks have no choice and have to be chased by dogs. It is a small step in the minds of ARs to try to restrict herding competitions. It will not stop here.

In 2006, I was at a huge all-breed Conformation, Obedience, Rally and Agility trial in Massachusetts. There was a survey going on regarding canine injuries in the sport of Agility. The idea was to try to reduce the number of injuries to dogs. The concept is great, but how could this idea be abused by the ARs? Obviously if such a study is needed, Agility is dangerous. Then a dog needs some basic obedience (sit, down, stay) for Agility.

Do not we insist on obedience in servants and slaves? Trainers use a variety of means to train dogs. No matter what the method used, formal training for various activities from

Rally Competition to Search and Rescue is considered bad by the ARs. Insisting on obedience and having dogs work with us is bad. Listen to a staunch AR person talk about dogs working with or for us, they do use words such as enslavement. Obedience training and competitions will be next. Then there is Conformation.

Conformation, according to the AR movement, is nothing but an elitist sport designed to encourage the exploitation and production of genetically inferior, inbred dogs for the sole purpose of beefing up some snot's ego. These dogs must be unsound physically and mentally. Purebred dog breeders do nothing to encourage people to be politically correct and go adopt a mutt from a pound. Purebred dogs are evil and not needed. In addition, they are intentionally bred by humans and breeding is bad. Therefore, this must go too.

Again, this progression is no stretch of the imagination. Talk to or better yet listen to the undertones of the Animal Rights Movement. They target all aspects of the dog fancy and are patient, taking baby steps to achieve their goals. By backing things such as anti-tethering and penning laws, mandatory altering, breeding bans, breed specific legislations, docking/cropping/debarking bans, etc., they are working to undermine our lives, our hobbies. They will often start with the activities that will grab at the heartstrings of the average sheltered suburban American with too much money and not enough to do or too much to do and a need to feel "good." Even if you are not directly affected this time, just wait. Pit Bull to Bull Mastiff, Mushing to Weight Pulling, Anti-Tethering Laws to grooming noose, anti-penning laws to confinement at dogs shows, none are big leaps in the animal rights world. No matter what the law proposed, if it will negatively affect part of the good dog world, it will trickle down to the rest of us.

We have to have the backs of those who hunt with dogs. If they lose their rights, ours will follow.

Hunters, you need to have our backs as well. Even if you feel dog shows are nothing but frou-frou contests for over-bred, extreme beasts that could not get out of a paper bag with a ripped side, if we lose our rights, yours will follow.

We all have to put aside our differences, if there are any, band together and work for the ability to keep our rights as hunters, breeders, exhibitors.

I will watch your back. Will you watch mine?

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