

Larry C. Hartz
72 Buckwalter Road
Spring City, PA 19475
(610) 948-0340 (Home)

2559

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Dear Governor Rendell:

It was nice talking with you on December 13, 2006 at the "Dog Laws" meeting and I would like to start this lettering by thanking you for affording me the opportunity to give you my input on revising the "Dog Laws". I will give you a brief background summary on myself so it will assist you with the information I provide to you.

I am a fifty-four year old high school graduate without a college education, who is currently retired from the State of Pennsylvania after thirty-one years of service. I worked at Pennhurst State School & Hospital and retired from Norristown State Hospital's Forensic Unit in July of 2001. I've lived in Montgomery and/or Chester Counties my entire life.

I've been involved with breeding since a young child, as my mother was involved with breeding. For the past twenty (plus) years I been involved with breeding Beagles. I love the breed and enjoy running my dogs for rabbits. I don't hunt with a gun, but I do run them regularly (a minimum of two times a week).

Since my retirement I spend a great deal of time researching and talking with other Beagle breeders (from many counties and states) to gain a insight into breeding a quality dog. I go as far as to respond to ads in the local papers to find out about their operation and the genealogical history of their dogs. I've even gone out to visit different sights to view the set-up and quality of their dogs.

I have good reputation locally (veterinarians, local pets stores and past buyers), so I get way more calls for puppies then I can supply. As I only breed a couple litters a year. My goal is to assist people with obtaining a quality dog and I will direct them to reputable dealers for no fee. Many, many times I have been asked why would I do this and people just don't understand why I give them so much time for free. I explain that I'd like to enable the quality breeders stay in business and help them to obtain a good pet. Just this month alone I've gotten four calls regarding pups I sold this past fall, thanking me for the wonderful pet they have received and going on and on with, "it's the best dog we've ever had", etc. etc. Last month a ninety year old lady with her sixty-five year old son stop by

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because they just had to put their beagle down after fifteen years. She said the same thing, it was the best dog they ever had and would only purchase a dog from me. She is more than happy to wait until I breed in the Spring, so she can obtain a "good dog".

I've heard numerous complaints about pet stores from potential buyers/callers. That the dogs just don't look right, they have worm infestations or end up sickly. Also, that they are way over priced. You know, that the American dream is to own your own home with a yard so you can provide your children with a dog. There is no better feeling than seeing a child leaving with his first dog and knowing they received a quality dog that they will enjoy for many years. Well now that you got my background, I will go on with my concerns regarding the "Dog Laws".

1. Criteria for Dog Law Enforcement Officers: Should include a high school education with two years of law enforcement and five years of kennel/breeding experience so that they have an understanding of the functions of a kennel, and so that they can readily recognize illnesses or dogs in distress.
2. Square Footage Required Per Dog in Kennel: A good rule of thumb is to break this down by weight class, as is done with dog crates, by poundage (small, medium, large and extra large). There is a great deal of difference between a Beagle and a Saint Bernard. The same would go for puppies, puppies under four weeks of age don't require a lot of space to move around. Puppies should not be included in this criteria. According to this criteria, if a dog has six puppies it would require an additional 600 square feet, which would be very costly and unrealistic.
3. Kennel Registration Requirements: You must obtain a kennel license if you have more than twenty-six dogs in one calendar year. **Puppies should be eliminated from this count or there should be an exception.** Maybe change it to twenty-six dogs at any given time instead of in one calendar year.

My current situation is that I own eleven dogs. Three males (two of which are under three months old), eight females (one of which is over twelve years old who hasn't been breed for years and will not be breed and a house dog, which will not be breed, as she had complications with her only litter-caesarian section then a staph infection. So I have six females that are available for breeding purposes. I **do not** and **will not** breed them every heat/year nor should anyone else. (Example: *If I breed two dogs this year and they produce twelve puppies that puts me at twenty-three and maybe the following year I would like to breed three dogs and they have eighteen or more that would put me over the regulation at twenty-nine*

dogs.) Then again there have been years where no dog was bred. I'd be required to get a Kennel License sporadically. It is just easier to license each dog.

My beagles generally whelp 4-6 puppies per litter, but this has ranged from 1-8, eight being an exception. Whereas it is not uncommon for Labradors and German Sheppard whelp twelve puppies.

Small time breeders/individual owners like myself do not wanted to be ruled by the kennel laws, as this is more a hobby and not a business adventure. This is a very expensive hobby as it is, AKC cost continually increase, pet registration was just raised to \$20.00 per dog; a minimum of a yearly visit to the veterinary for well visits, they now recommend yearly lymes testing (which is expensive); cost of fencing; keeping the houses in good condition and food.

This is America and we greatly appreciated the freedom which our county men have provided for us with many lives. We continually get more and more regulations dumped on us and we don't want to lose yet another freedom. You know, you buy a house and own your land, but you can't do whatever you want on your own land because of various laws and township regulations and zoning. You feel as though you are losing yet another freedom.

4. Required Exercise: I do agree that all dogs should get exercise and that they shouldn't be penned up at all times. Even though my dog operation is very small scaled and my girlfriend and I are retired and her daughter are highly involved with the dogs (our pets). It is an impossibility/unreasonable request to guarantee twenty minutes of exercise per dog per day. Due to inclement weather, family illnesses, necessary appointments, emergencies, etc. etc. Many factors should be taken into consideration here, the size of the dog and the size of their pen. Our dogs have large pens compared to their size and have plenty of room to play/move about. There are many days our dogs are out for two hours or more and/or more than once a day, because one of us is usually home. Are puppies are usually so wonderful because of quality breeding and a great deal of human contact. When they start moving about they get a lot of personal attention and exercise, that's part of what makes our dogs such excellent pets.
5. Climate Controlled Environment: If this is to be addressed, it needs to be separated into two categories. *Indoor Kennels* and *Outdoor Kennels* and to be broken down by breeds, which would be a tedious task for the Enforcement.

Outdoor Kennels: I agree that there should be a required shady area for the dogs with a fresh potable water supply available at all times, but to require fans and/or

any other cooling device for outdoor dog kennels is unreasonable. If they are accustomed to the outdoors and have ample shade, fresh water and shelter they do just fine, but there again our dogs are Beagles and are short haired. During the winter/colder months they are supplied with bedding and the buddy system (two dogs to a house so they have ample body heat from each other). Even though they

are short haired they do not mind the cold at all. Daily sanitizing of outdoor kennels during the winter months should not be a requirement as it would be more of a detriment to the dog than an asset and should not be required to be done during extremely low temperatures as the liquids would turn to ice rather than evaporate and dry. Although, we strongly believe in sanitizing prior to putting a different dog into that particular kennel. In my particular situation the same dog is in the same kennel and are rarely moved around.

Indoor Kennels: Which would have electricity already supplied (or should have electricity) should have a different set of rules. There should be some type of fresh air circulation/exchange in the summer and winter and be required to keep maintain certain temperatures. Several piles of feces indoors could be quite caustic, where outdoors you have fresh air all around. Regular sanitation in this case would be a necessity.

I have only hit briefly on my main concerns. I greatly appreciate you enabling me to be part of the team and look forward to seeing you in March. I am willing to assist you with my input and in anyway possible.

I am greatly concerned about the pendulum swing. The current laws are not being enforced to drive out the puppy mills and adding new laws that will drive out the good breeders. We need to reach a happy medium. A great example was Pennhurst State School and Hospital. When I began working their in 1972 there were many, many patients there that didn't belong there. Some of the older patients were placed there by their parents because they were behavior problems and slow learners or mildly retarded. Then by 1984 the closing out phased began and by 1986 they were required to place bed patients and profoundly retarded patients into group homes in there county of origin. Since I had enough years of service I remained until the end. There were many, many horror stories of patients becoming severely/fatally injured or just dying because of environmental change and/or because they didn't receive the quality of care and attention they received in an instructional setting (24 hour a day staff/care with nursing and physician staff available at all times).

Page 5

Please do not allow a complete pendulum swing with the "Dog Laws". Enforce the laws we already have in place, put more Dog Law Enforcement Officers in Counties with higher kennel populations, like Lancaster, and be more astringent on enforcing the laws already on record.

Sincerely,

Larry C. Hartz

Cc: Mary Bender
Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408