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*MRS. YVONNE A. HRICAK
104 Forest Avenue
Hershey, PA 17033*

January 31, 2007

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

Dear Ms. Bender:

I am writing this letter to you in response to the information published in the Patriot News on Sunday, January 28, 2007, page A15.

My first reaction is – YOU WILL CREATE A MONSTER. We have laws in place to deal with illegal puppy breeders. Enforce them. And enforce the spay-neuter program. It is not the conscientious home breeder you should be going after, it is the puppy mills. We do not need laws on the books to hamper legitimate breeders.

I have purchased two pets through "reliable" pet stores in past years and have been sorely disappointed in the health of these dogs. It took many visits to the veterinarian and expense to fix problems I should not have had to deal with. While we fall in love with our animals, it is a sorry commentary on those stores when we receive less than a healthy pup. Money is the primary motivation, not the best example of a breed.

My latest purchase of a purebred dog from a private breeder was an enlightening and rewarding experience. You cannot just call this lady and say you want a puppy. I went through a screening process discussing my lifestyle, ability to take care of a purebred dog, and all the other attendant factors into the process of determining if I would be a good owner. She is, I might add, one of the top breeders in the country for the Yorkshire Terrier. Through many conversations and a personal visit to the breeder, I ultimately obtained a dog, who is the absolute joy of my life. Healthy, happy and a perfect specimen of the breed. Her temperament fits my lifestyle and she is a much loved companion. My breeder, and I am positive other reputable breeders, takes the time and effort to breed those best qualities of each dog into the next generation. They nurture them, assist in the birth of their puppies in a warm, loving, cozy atmosphere. I have received continuing advice from her on the best way to handle different little items that arise raising a dog. Her kennels are spotless, she has a heated tile floor in her facility, she has attendants who care for the dogs daily, i.e. brushing, combing, bathing. The dogs are allowed to socialize with one another. It is a learning skill that produces a well-rounded, social dog. She has a top-rated facility as documented by every inspection she has undergone. And their ultimate concern is making certain that the dog they have raised goes to a good quality home. My dog is proof of that dedication.

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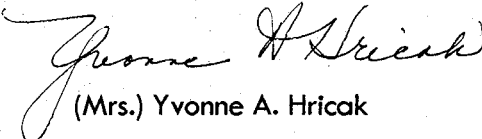
The laws you seek to put into effect would eliminate these top-notch breeders by making the changes you mandate prohibitively expensive to accomplish and by virtue of your campaign, allow the puppy mills to go "underground". While they would appear to close shop, they would still sell dogs illegally "under the radar".

Would a large "corporation" take the time to do all the good things mentioned above? I think not. The personal care and attention demonstrated by conscientious breeders is a guarantee you get when you deal with a reputable private breeder. I would not dream of purchasing a pet from a large corporation – regardless of their mandate.

Enforce the laws we have now have in place regarding puppy mills, but please do NOT jeopardize the private breeder. The breed shows, competitions, etc. all contribute a great deal to the local economy. They are a delight to attend and see the best of the best! I cannot believe the State of PA would jeopardize this additional revenue to the state. But the most important consideration of this entire situation is the breeder who loves her animals and does the very best for them. A corporation cannot possibly render this same loving service. It would seem to me at the very least you could "grandfather" the reputable kennels currently licensed who have passed inspection and go after those puppy mills that have given Pennsylvania the undesirable stigma of mass produced puppies, namely in the Lancaster County area. Make new kennels adhere to your proposed new rules. But most importantly, make those rules feasible for the home breeder. Isn't it worth a try to more strictly enforce the spay-neuter program?

Please do not put the reputable breeder out of business. To impose the laws of a large corporation on the legitimate home breeder and risk the loss of these reputable breeders would be a loss to all of us.

Sincerely,


(Mrs.) Yvonne A. Hricak

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