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Animal Behaviorist
Eve D. Marschark, Ph.D., CPDT
P.O. BOX 397
3118 FARM SCHOOL ROAD
BEDMINSTER, PA 18910
215-901-0401

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March 4, 2007.

Charles T. McIlhinney Jr. (R)
Senate Box 203010
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3010
187 Main Capitol
phone: (717) 787-7305
fax: (717) 783-5962
e-mail: cmcilhinney@pasen.gov
215-489-5000

Dear Mr. McIlhinney Jr.,

I am an Animal Behaviorist with a Ph.D. in Psychology from Temple University. My area of expertise is research in HUMAN-DOG INTERACTION and I am certified as an animal behavior consultant by the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants and by the Association of Pet Dog Trainers.

I am appalled to hear that these changes in our Pennsylvania Dog Law are actually under consideration.

While I am opposed to "puppy mills" and wish every dog could get a loving, deserving home I urge you to exercise caution in the methods you use to achieve such well-intentioned goals.

The proposed changes appear to make it impossible for home breeders and dog enthusiasts to continue to breed and raise healthy, mentally sound puppies. The protection of dog breeders who are dedicated to their breed should be considered when changing laws to affect more humane conditions for dogs.

I visit patients in our local hospital and adult day care centers with one of my dogs and I know we have a very positive effect on the patients and staff just by the very presence of the dog. Dogs add so much to the human experience for so many people. That is why the Delta Society (see www.Deltasociety.org) was formed; to help establish a safe venue for pets to visit hospital patients to speed their healing process and ease stress.

Dogs serve a vital role for people. They serve as a link between man and environment. Throughout time, dogs have been banned from society, such as in China (see book by Serpell, In the Company of Dogs). These laws were propelled by politics and not by kind intentions. The psychological effects of your proposed changes will be harsh, traumatic and probably constitutionally illegal in the end.

We need well socialized dogs of sound temperament and the best way to achieve that is by raising puppies in the home setting with all the sounds, smells and stimuli of daily life with humans. Legislating that puppies can only be raised in standardized, sterile, commercial type settings is a FAST WAY TO CREATE ABNORMALLY DEVELOPED DOGS. This is not just my opinion, there is scientific support to my claim (see any Introduction to Psychology textbook and look under the chapter on sensory and mental development).

To allow this bill to pass as it is would be a disaster. If you need an educated perspective, please call me or ask me to sit in on one of your sessions. I would be happy to assist in the evaluation process. Or ask James Serpell from the University of Pennsylvania.

I counsel owners on canine behavioral issues and know first hand the effects of improper handling of dogs and puppies. I have raised the most temperamentally, bizarre breed, the Border Collie, for over 20 years and I know about genetics and the selection of mentally sound breeding stock. Improving the living

conditions of commercially bred dogs (while a worthwhile objective on its own) will not solve the problem of poorly bred dogs: involved and devoted small breeders ARE the answer. Do not force them out of the picture.

Please be careful when you try to make improvements. Ask for advice from behavior specialists and the thousands of hobby breeders who only have the best interest of the dog in mind. Pennsylvania has hundreds of dedicated dog clubs you should be listening to. Do not only listen to people who want to ban all pet ownership or ban all dog breeding.

Have you asked input from *Alana Reisner, DVM from the University of Pennsylvania Small Animal Behavior Clinic?*

Have you asked for help from *James Serpell, Ph.D. at the U of P?*

Have you asked for advice from *the International Society of Anthrozoology (ISAZ at www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/CCAB/isaz ?*

Have you asked the *Center for the Interaction of Animals and Society (CIAS) www.vet.upenn.edu/cias ?*

How about the *Animal Behavior Society (ABS) www.animalbehavior.org ?*

How about the *American Veterinarian Medical Association (AVMA)?*

Have you asked the *Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) www.apdt.com*

or the International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC) www.iaabc.com ?

What about *Delta Society www.deltasociety.org ?*

Please be careful. Do not just listen to a handful of beliefs and opinions. Do your homework.

Most sincerely,



Eve D. Marschark, Ph.D.