

**Kathy Cooper**

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**From:** Dona [Buttinwood@Comcast.Net]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 16, 2007 3:12 PM  
**To:** IRRRC  
**Subject:** Fw: dog law proposal  
**Importance:** High

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
 REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Coccodrilli,

I have sent a copy of this to my congressmen & Governor Rendell. Senator Brubaker has visited my rescue foster home to learn more about how pet rescues work.

I want to commend the governor & the legislature for taking steps to curtail the puppy mill industry in PA !! As a member of the pet rescue community, I have very strong feelings about the issue. PA residents do not like being referred to as one of the worst puppy mill states in the country.

I urge you to take thoughtful consideration of the following points:

**\*\*Budget increases** for the ENFORCEMENT of both dog laws & humane laws in the state. We can have all the laws we want, but without enforcement, the laws are meaningless & their enactment are just lip service. We have not funded enforcement of the laws we have & that is a large part of the current problem. Each officer has a huge territory to enforce, sometimes more than one county.

**\*\*Appointment of ethical, animal lovers** to positions of importance. Unlike the example in the Patriot News on Mon., March 12, where clean records exist, even though violations had been noted!! Was there a payoff involved in this? PA constituents would love to trust that the people in authority "do the right thing" in the job for which they take home a paycheck. As long as violations are overlooked or not noted at all, we gain nothing by further lawmaking.

**\*\*Wording in the current proposal section 21.3** should include that state police officers & humane society police officers are authorized to enforce this proposal, rather than just the Dept. of Ag. Our Dog Law enforcement officers do not have police powers & cannot even carry items for self defense, should they need it, when entering properties.

**\*\*Humane / Cruelty law violations** should carry a stiff penalty. Puppy millers make thousands of dollars dealing in misery. Penalties that are a slap on the wrist mean nothing when big money is at stake.

**\*\*As a member of the rescue community, I URGE** you to take a close look at the differences between mass breeders & rescues. Some of the items in this proposal will actually hurt the ethical groups & help the millers!! That is not the intent of the governor, the legislature, or the constituents!! The time you take in consideration of these issues will make or break those of us who do not make money on animals. Here is the situation: Puppy millers make hundreds of thousands of dollars a year by raising companion pets in inhumane conditions with no expenditure for healthcare & huge monetary return. Rescue groups sell baked goods, hold fund raisers, & contribute large parts of their own incomes trying to save as many needy pets as they can. Animal emotional & physical well-being are rescues' priorities. Our vet bills alone, run into thousands of dollars per month. We do not make a profit on animals. Our finances are always in the red & we constantly need to come up with fundraising ideas to survive. We try to clean up the "mess" created by irresponsible groups & individuals. We do on our own time-effort-expense, what government has not been able to do in curtailing the pet overpopulation problem. We do it by getting "down & dirty" on the frontlines. Puppy mill legislation should use us as examples of standards to which millers should be held. We are not anything alike & laws that treat us "the same" are totally counterproductive. Rescues actually work & show results.

A well-known slogan is "Do no harm." Please research this issue thoroughly before your vote!! What you do here can be extremely vital in cleaning up PA's reputation on the issue. I urge you to be VERY careful not to further

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hinder those groups that are truly making a difference in animal well-being. Contact some rescue groups to learn more about how they operate. Ask them what legislature can do to help to further their cause & what actually hurts them. Little things that you may not think about can have a huge impact. Just one item is licensing of each rescue dog. All our animals are altered. The license fee for altered animals is only \$6, which doesn't seem like much. But, it is not a state license, rather a county. Our rescue, for one, has foster homes in several different counties. We may have a foster dog for a few weeks or a few months. We adopt to any county. So, most likely another license will be needed when the dog is adopted. \$6 per dog is a lot of money to us when our adoption donation is standard -animal to animal, regardless of vetcare or other costs involved in the care of the pet. Some of our pets have required surgery or extensive medical care to be adoptable. Do the puppy millers license all their hundreds of dogs? The point is - we need you to research to see what's working in the area of pet well-being. Little things can hurt.

Small time breeders who show their dogs & work to improve bloodlines & temperaments within a breed do not operate in mill conditions & do not work with numbers of animals that they can't give personal attention & care to. They take pride in the quality animals they produce. The cost of some of the changes proposed will severely hurt them as well. They are not the same as mass operations & deserve to be treated equitably.

Just as in gun control or anything else, the law-abiding citizen who does the right thing, is licensed & controlled. The criminals don't give a hoot about licensing & get whatever & do whatever they please. Millers who lose their licenses continue without licenses, so that they can't be inspected without a warrant. Please take the time, in this very important pet welfare proposal, to get as much insight as possible. Hold the millers to our standards, rather than us to theirs. As long as they profit, they thrive. If you want to get rid of them & the reputation, you need to lessen their profits & increase their accountability & penalties. It's as simple as that.

Respectfully & hopefully submitted,  
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