



MISSOURI ALLIANCE FOR ANIMAL LEGISLATION E-NEWS

Puppy Mill Industry Continues to Fight New Law

January 7, 2013 - The new Canine Cruelty Prevention Act, which improves standards of care for dogs confined in puppy mills, is facing strong criticism from dog breeders. At a recent hearing before the Interim Commission of Agriculture Innovation and Economic Recovery, a representative for Hunte Corporation, the largest broker of pet store puppies in the country, complained that their business has declined by over 50% and that they have downsized from 350 employees to 150 since the passage of the Canine Cruelty Prevention Act. Hunte's decrease in business is a result of hundreds of dog breeders leaving the business since the passage of the new law.

Unfortunately, what wasn't explained to this legislative Committee was the reason why so many commercial dog breeders have stopped breeding dogs. Namely, that far too many were in the business simply for a quick buck. The single most distinguishing characteristic of many of these breeders was to produce puppies as cheaply as possible regardless of the welfare of the breeding dogs. Too often, a breeding dog could be replaced cheaper than having it treated by a veterinarian and thus many breeding dogs were left to languish in the hope it would get better on its own. Fortunately, the Canine Cruelty Prevention Act now requires veterinary care for a seriously ill animal and every breeding dog must be examined at least once a year by a veterinarian. While most pet owners routinely have their dogs examined yearly, such a requirement for dogs producing up to two litters a year was seen as too costly for many commercial dog breeders.



Governor Nixon announces
Canine Cruelty Prevention Act at press
conference

The new law also requires that breeders provide their dogs with adequate living space and access to the outdoors. If there was ever hard evidence of the abusive living conditions of puppy mill dogs, it is the fact that 50% of the dog breeders have closed down rather than meet these basic humane standards of care for their animals.

As a new legislative session begins in Jefferson City on January 9, it is obvious that the puppy mill industry will be pressuring legislators to weaken the new law. Likewise, you can be assured that the Alliance will be there fighting to defend our laws protecting animals from abuse and maltreatment. We will be reminding the legislature that the commercial dog breeding industry agreed to the new law and that they are now going back on their word.

In addition, dog breeding representatives have filed a lawsuit to overturn key provisions in the Canine Cruelty Prevention Act. The suit names Governor Nixon, Attorney General Chris Koster, and Director Jon Hagler of the Missouri Department of Agriculture. The industry's initial request for a temporary restraining order against the regulations has thankfully failed. We will keep you informed of the progress of this law suit.



Missouri puppy mill conditions

It is truly telling when common sense measures such as veterinary care, adequate living space, and fresh air are drawing so much ire from the commercial dog breeders. As one USDA inspector told a group of Missouri breeders shortly after the new law passed, you should welcome the new law as it finally gives you an opportunity to rid yourself of the moniker of "puppy mill." Regrettably, the mindset of the industry has not changed as they continue to fight and oppose basic care of their breeding animals.

On the plus side, our new law is forcing out the bad breeders and their stubborn resistance to the new law is clear evidence that we are making significant progress in ending puppy mill abuse in Missouri. Thank you for your support which has resulted in a major victory for the dogs.

###