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## Rendell signs puppy mill bill

Governor visits Bucks to sign legislation

By Peter Ciferri

LANGHORNE - It was a dog day afternoon Monday as Gov. Ed Rendell (DPa.) signed the "Puppy Mill Bill" into effect at a ceremony in Langhorne. Alongside administrators from the Center for Animal Referral and Emergency Services (CARES) and Hope for the Animals, Rendell signed Act 119, which calls for the elimination of deplorable conditions in puppy breeding and commercial kennels.

"The advocates and ordinary dog owners and dog lovers made their voice clear," Rendell said. "You guys got this bill passed."

He credited State Sen.

Michael Brubaker (R-36) for his continued work to see the bills through the state house and senate.

"We, the dog lovers decided that Pennsylvania's time had come to end being the puppy mill of the east, and we did that in a way that will transform us from being the puppy mill of the east to being one of the best states that has protection for dogs," Rendell said.

He said previous legislation and a lack thereof allowed dogs to be kept in cramped, stacked cages with limited or no opportunity for exercise and proper care. The governor said these conditions don't just lead to a poor standard of living for dogs, but can also lead to physical and psychological problems.

"It's tragic when a dog comes into a family with those behavioral problems," Rendell, who owns an adopted dog, said. "No amount of love can turn it around."

The bill addressed the health and welfare needs of dogs housed in large commercial breeding kennels including physical standards for cage size and floorir within one year.

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"The Bible says 'bless the beasts and the children' and today, in signing this bill, Pennsylvania takes a giant stride toward living up to that," Rendell said.

A provision that allows only veterinarians to euthanize dogs in commercial breeding kennels took effect immediately, according to officials.

"We do wind up seeing a lot of puppies that come out of puppy mills," CARES Director Dr. John Rappaport said. "All too often people set out to get a healthy puppy and instead wind up with a very ill animal."

Rappaport, who joined Rendell at the signing, said buying an unhealthy "puppy mill pet is an "expensive financial and emotional proposition" that he hopes to see quelled with the new bill.

Other protections include doubling the minimum floor space for dogs, eliminating wire flooring and requiring exercise in at least double the size of the dog's enclosure. The law also requires dogs to have access to water at all times and requires veterinary exams for each dog twice per year.

State Rep. Chris King (D-142) joined Rendell at the signing. He said it was "an honor to have the governor come to our community" to sign a bill that got "overwhelming support" from 142nd District residents.

CARES is a full service specialty and emergency referral veterinary hospital. A special fund run by

Hope for the Animals works with CARES to provide financial assistance to pet owners who are unable to pay the full cost of veterinary care.

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