

Governor Challenges Dog Law Advisory Board

Pennsylvania's Rendell says board needs to become an advocate for dogs.

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In its first meeting since over a dozen members were removed from it, Pennsylvania's Dog Law Enforcement Advisory Board was challenged by Gov. Ed Rendell to become advocates for better dog breeding and kennels.

Rendell's comments launched the Dec. 13 meeting of the board, its first since the governor dismissed the entire 14-member board in May, citing dissatisfaction with its direction.

Sixteen new members were subsequently named.

In his comments during the meeting, the governor acknowledged that due to a large number of commercial breeders, Pennsylvania has a reputation as a puppy-mill state. He said that proper regulations in new laws would eliminate practices that create puppy mills, breeding operations that use dogs in poor living conditions to turn out litters of puppies without proper health testing or socialization..

In October, Rendell proposed changes to Pennsylvania's dog law to rid the state of its distinction as, in his words, the "puppy mill capital of the East Coast."

According to state licensing data, Pennsylvania has almost 2,600 licensed kennels and breeders. Licenses are not required, however, for anyone who boards or sells 26 or fewer dogs in a calendar year.

The governor said he was not against large kennels that can hold up to 1,000 dogs, but added that such kennels probably couldn't operate under the proposed regulations.