

Pennsylvania Targets At-Home Dog Ear Cropping

New law makes it illegal for owners to perform certain medical procedures on their dogs.

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Pennsylvania Gov. Edward Rendell on Aug. 27 signed House Bill 39, which establishes penalties for dog owners who perform certain medical procedures.

Under the new law, the following procedures can only be performed by a trained and licensed veterinarian: Cropping, trimming or cutting off an ear; Debarking by cutting or injuring the vocal cords; Docking or cutting off the tail of a dog over five days of age; Surgically birthing a dog; and Removing the dewclaws from a dog over five days of age.

“HB 39 clearly defines painful and inhumane procedures on dogs by anyone other than a licensed vet as animal cruelty,” Gov. Rendell said. “Until now, these cruel practices could be carried out by dog owners without proper training and without supervision by a licensed vet, which could lead to long-term injury, pain and, in some cases, death to these defenseless animals.”

The dog’s owner must keep a record of the surgery, including the vet who performed it, as well as the location and date where the surgery was performed.

In addition, the law makes it a 3rd degree felony to steal an animal for the purpose of dogfighting.