

Pennsylvania Governor Dismisses Dog Advisory Board

Move was made because the dog advisory board hadn't done enough to stop so-called puppy mills.

Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell has fired all 14 members of a panel that advises the state on its dog law, saying they hadn't done enough to control commercial breeders.

Animal activists in the state have labeled Pennsylvania the puppy mill capital of the East, and say the state is home to numerous lucrative, virtually unregulated operations that breed puppies, sometimes amid horrid conditions.

Some of the members of the dog-law panel who were fired told the local media they were being blamed unfairly, since the states Agriculture Secretary, Dennis Wolff, has called them to meetings only three times since Rendell took office in 2003.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has gone on record saying the blame lies with the state's Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement, which the society says has not hired enough dog wardens or properly trained them or enforced every aspect of the law.

Rendell fired the advisory board via letters last week. His administration also seeks changes to state law in an effort to require puppy breeders to give their dogs more exercise and provide a clean and dry living space that is adequately protected from the elements.

However, the Humane Society has criticized the proposal, saying it should require an increase in cage size instead of more exercise, which it said would be problematic for rescue groups that only temporarily care for dogs.

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