

Dog Kennel Legislation Introduced in Ohio

If approved, new legislation would set standards for dog kennel size and conditions.

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Three lawmakers have introduced legislation that would require dog kennels in Ohio meet a standard of care for the dogs they house, as well as provide adequate medical care for the animals.

Ohio State Senator Gary Cates, along with State Rep. Jim Hughes (R-Clintonville) and State Rep. Robert Hagan (D-Youngstown), have introduced Senate Bill 173 and House Bill 223, which would adopt safeguards and enforcement procedures to ensure dogs used primarily for breeding purposes are not mistreated.

The legislation, which was introduced May 17, would require the Ohio Department of Agriculture to create a state-level commercial dog kennel control authority, responsible for licensing kennels and setting a standard of care for these dogs, as well as inspecting and enforcing the laws and rules regarding the standard of care in commercial kennels around the state.

The legislation is an effort to cut down on animal mistreatment by commercial dog breeding operations.

"After rescuing my own dog, Pretty Girl, from a puppy mill, I saw firsthand the horrible conditions these dogs are forced to live in," Cates said at a news conference announcing the bill.

"While Ohio already has animal cruelty laws in place, there are very few people to enforce them, leaving the door open for puppy mill operators to continue neglecting and harming these dogs. It is my hope that this bill will protect other dogs like Pretty Girl who must wait for a loving family to come rescue them," Sen. Cates said.

The bill will also set some standards for dog kennels, including the size and conditions of the cages in which the dogs are kept. In addition, the proposal creates guidelines for socializing, providing veterinary care and proper grooming of dogs being kept at licensed commercial kennels that house nine or more dogs.

"This legislation will crack down on irresponsible breeders that treat their animals as a simple means to an end. Hopefully, the threat of substantial fines and a jail time will drive these bad actors out of the dog-breeding business," Rep. Hagan said.