



Legislation Text

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Calling on the Pennsylvania State Legislature to pass pending legislation to ensure adequate funding for the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement, which helps to protect the health and well being of dogs that are bred and sold in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and City of Philadelphia have historically endeavored to ensure humane treatment of dogs and other animals. For example, the Pennsylvania Legislature has passed progressive legislation to prevent abuses at irresponsible kennels and breeders, and provide services to animals that are sick or neglected. The City of Philadelphia has joined in these efforts, creating local protections for animals subject to cruelty and working to prevent inhumane breeding practices; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement is the state agency responsible for administering a variety of programs aimed at ensuring the safety and well being of dogs and their human counterparts. These include: licensing and inspecting commercial kennels and breeders, providing shelter programs for stray dogs, investigating of claims of animal abuse, and responding to dog bites. Each year, the Bureau performs 5,000 kennel inspections to ensure animal well being, and provides shelter for 5,000 dogs until they can be reunited with their owners; and

WHEREAS, The Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement is funded primarily by the dedicated Dog Law Restricted Account, which over the years has not kept pace with the Bureau's mandate to provide. Nearly 85% of funding to the Dog Law Restricted Account is generated by revenues from dog licensure, the fees for which have not changed in over 20 years. Increasing these difficulties, nearly \$4 million was diverted from the Account in order to help balance the state budget in 2009, leaving the Account near insolvency; and

WHEREAS, In order to provide necessary protections for citizens and dogs in the Commonwealth, Senator Judy Schwank has introduced SB 738, while her colleague Representative Eddie Pashinski has introduced HB 1463, both of which aim to put the Dog Law Restricted Account on more stable financial footing through an increase in licensing fees. The new fees would represent an increase of roughly 50% and would generate an additional \$1 million annually. Coupled with ongoing modernization efforts, which have already generated \$1.1 million in annual savings, this new funding source will ensure that the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement is able to carry out its crucial mission; and

WHEREAS, The obligation to protect our four-legged friends is one which Philadelphians take seriously. Dogs are beloved members of families across the City of Philadelphia and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Ensuring proper funding to the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement is vital to their protection; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby calls on the Pennsylvania State Legislature to pass pending legislation to ensure adequate funding for the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement, which helps to protect the health and well being of dogs that are bred and sold in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

