



Protect Dogs in Experiments – Support the Dog and Cat Protection Act

Legislation to place standards on the breeding of dogs for testing and to ensure an opportunity for their adoption.

Background:

Last summer, the Humane Society of the United States was approached by the U.S. Department of Justice to remove roughly 4,000 beagles found at a facility in Cumberland, Virginia, which was breeding the dogs to be sold to animal testing laboratories. In July of 2021, the facility was cited by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for 26 violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), and then subsequent inspections that year found 26 additional violations, including 16 repeat and 14 critical or direct infractions. We were pleased to work with 10 organizations (Adams County SPCA, Animal Care Sanctuary, Animal Friends, Anna Shelter, Beaver County Humane Society, Brandywine Valley SPCA, Butler County Humane Society, Heart of Glass Animal Rescue, Humane Animal Rescue, Washington Area Humane Society), from PA to find adoptive homes for nearly 200 beagles.

But these dogs should never have been subjected to these horrible conditions. In response to this situation, bipartisan legislation was passed and signed by Governor Youngkin in Virginia to ensure that all dogs and cats bred for use in a research facility receive humane treatment. The Beagle Protection Act will ensure the same cruel fate does not happen to dogs bred for use in research and testing in Pennsylvania.

Overview of Legislation (Three Bill Package introduced by Representative Ryan Bizzarro and Senator Carolyn Comitta):

- Dogs are often used in experiments funded by federal research agencies, like NIH, or to meet safety standards imposed by federal regulatory agencies, such as the EPA or FDA. These dogs are bred to live their entire lives confined in laboratory settings.
- To meet this demand for test subjects, tens of thousands of dogs destined for labs are born at breeding facilities every year. Most dogs in laboratories are purpose-bred, meaning that they are bred with the intent of selling them to laboratories that use dogs in harmful experiments.
- The Dog and Cat Protection Act would prevent a dealer or kennel from selling or offering for sale a dog or cat bred by a person who has received the following AWA violations:
 - Citation for a direct or critical violation or citations for three or more indirect or noncritical violations during the two-year period, or
 - Two consecutive citations for no access to a housing facility before the procurement of the dog or cat.
- This legislation also ensures dogs and cats used as research subjects and not euthanized at the end of the experiment are offered the opportunity for placement in adoptive homes. Federal law does not offer any assurance that animals will be protected once a research project ends. Fifteen states across the United States, including in recent years Iowa and Virginia, have instituted successful adoption laws for dogs and cats.

HSUS Contact: Kristen Tullo, Pennsylvania State Director, at ktullo@humanesociety.org