

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 28, 2018

The Honorable Donald Trump  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

Many American families have dogs as pets, and they are often considered members of the family. As such, we need to do everything possible to protect their wellbeing and ensure that they live long and fulfilling lives. Sadly, many dogs are forced to live in atrocious conditions at breeding facilities known as “puppy mills.” We encourage you to prioritize cracking down on puppy mills by directing USDA to update the humane care and treatment standards for commercial dog dealers under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

Squalid conditions run rampant in puppy mills. Many dogs live their entire lives in tiny, stacked wire cages. These conditions cause physical and behavioral harm to dogs housed there, and families are left heartbroken when they purchase sick and poorly-adjusted puppies.

The Puppy Protection Act (H.R. 4693) has recently been introduced in the House. This legislation instructs the USDA to upgrade the AWA’s minimum standards. But updating these regulations is already within USDA’s authority under 7 U.S.C. §§ 2131 et seq., and, in fact, amending the regulations to ensure humane standards of care is the agency’s *obligation*. The bill was introduced in order to compel the agency to act.

Many states already require standards higher than those in the AWA, including solid flooring (so that dogs don’t get their feet stuck in wire floors), eliminating stacked cages (which cause too many animals to be crammed into a tiny space, thereby spreading disease), requiring daily exercise, and providing annual veterinary examinations.

By adopting reasonable, commonsense, and scientifically-supported changes like these, USDA will dramatically improve the lives of thousands of dogs, which will benefit the consumers and families who bring these animals into their lives. Directing the USDA to improve their animal welfare standards will be a victory for animals, animal lovers, and pet owners across America.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lou Barletta  
Member of Congress



Matt Gaetz  
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress




Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



Mike Bishop  
Member of Congress



Tom Marino  
Member of Congress



Ryan Costello  
Member of Congress




Martha McSally  
Member of Congress



Jeff Denham  
Member of Congress



Tom MacArthur  
Member of Congress



Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress