

# Federated Humane Societies of Pennsylvania

May 21, 2009

Representative Dwight Evans, Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Main Capitol  
Harrisburg, PA 17120


Dear Representative Evans:

I am writing on behalf of the 60 member societies of the Federated Humane Societies of Pennsylvania to oppose Section 1911 of SB 850 (Appropriations bill), which would transfer \$4,000,000 from the Dog Law Restricted Account into the General Fund. The Dog Law Restricted Account is funded almost entirely by the sale of dog licenses, and to a much lesser extent by fines from Dog Law violations. The Bureau employs more than 60 Dog Wardens and supervisors across the state who inspect kennels, investigate and prosecute dangerous dog cases, investigate claims of livestock damage caused by dogs and pick up stray dogs. In many rural areas Dog Wardens are the only people who perform the needed service of picking up stray dogs. Amendments to the Dog Law last year are designed to improve conditions for dogs kept in kennels and will significantly increase the inspection work load for Dog Law. The expenses for increased enforcement efforts must be covered by increasing license sales.

Dog Law depends on humane societies to provide housing and care for all of the stray dogs that they pick up. As some humane societies change the focus of their activities, they have closed their door to stray dogs. This puts an added burden on shelters still willing to accept strays and on Dog Wardens who must drive longer distances to find a place for dogs. Dog Wardens also need assistance from humane societies when enforcement efforts at kennels involve cruelty violations as well as Dog Law violations. Increasingly humane societies are being asked to find room for dogs removed from or relinquished by unlicensed kennels or kennels with cruelty and Dog Law violations. This week Humane League of Lancaster took in 90 chows from an unlicensed chow rescue organization after a joint investigation with Dog Law. Dog Law has been able to offset some of the burden to humane societies with a grant program to help shelters that accept their strays. This year 20 shelters which form a crucial part of the infrastructure for Dog Law, and which operate on budgets of under \$350,000, were approved for grants of up to \$15,000 each in the form of reimbursement for actual expenses such as utilities and food. 17 shelters with larger budgets were approved for smaller grants of \$10,000. This funding is crucial, especially for the smaller organizations, and is only available when the Secretary of Agriculture can declare a surplus in the restricted account.

Transferring \$4,000,000 from this account at a time when numbers of stray and abandoned dogs are on the rise, and when kennel inspection efforts are increasing, will seriously destabilize a system that is already under pressure. We urge you to reconsider Section 1911 and thank you for taking our views into consideration.

Sincerely,



Anne Irwin, President  
Federated Humane Societies of PA  
c/o Bucks County SPCA  
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Lahaska, PA 18931

cc: Members of the General Assembly  
Senator Dominic Pileggi