

Indiana Voters Support Stronger Oversight of Puppy Mills by 11-to-1 Margin

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New Survey Reveals Overwhelming Support for Legislation to Protect Pets from Cruelty and Abuse

A recent statewide survey by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc. reveals that 83 percent of Indiana voters support legislation that would strengthen protections for dogs in large-scale breeding facilities known as puppy mills, while only 7 percent oppose the measure. The survey also showed that 90 percent of Hoosiers want humane treatment of animals, including increased penalties for abuse and delineated authority for inspections and investigations concerning animal cruelty. Overwhelming margins in every demographic group—men, women, Democrats, Republicans and Independents—support legislation to protect pets from cruelty and abuse.

A bill under consideration in the state legislature (H.B. 1468) strengthens penalties for animal abuse, including a provision that provides basic standards of care for mass dog breeding facilities known as puppy mills. Puppy mills are mass dog breeding facilities that keep animals in factory farm confinement, often in filthy wire cages stacked on top of each other, with no exercise, socialization, or human interaction. Dogs from puppy mills are sold in pet stores, over the Internet, and directly to consumers with little or no regard for the dog's health or genetic history.

The bill would not affect responsible breeders, who already keep their dogs in humane conditions, or farmers.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture does not inspect puppy mills that sell over the Internet or directly to the public, leaving a massive gap in enforcement of humane conditions.

In addition to ensuring that all puppy mills are subject to inspection and licensure, the bill strengthens penalties and authorizes courts to prohibit persons convicted of animal cruelty from owning other animals in the future. The new legislation also makes it an offense to neglect animals by failing to provide them with shelter or medical treatment. Current Indiana law does not require individuals to provide their animals with shelter, which can be fatal, particularly in extreme weather conditions. Nearly 40 other states have shelter requirements in their anti-cruelty codes.

Generally speaking, 90 percent of Hoosiers said they support stronger legislation to promote the humane treatment of animals. The full text of the survey questions and results are below.

To learn more about puppy mills, visit humanesociety.org/puppermills.

625 Indiana voters interviewed statewide by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc. of Washington, D.C. from March 17 through March 19, 2009. Margin for error is plus or minus 4 percent.

QUESTION: Puppy mills are large-scale breeding facilities that sell puppies on the Internet and to pet stores. Here, mother dogs are often bred every heat cycle, year after year. Puppies are caged in unhealthy conditions with no exercise, socialization, or human interaction.

The state legislature is considering a bill to require that these dogs be provided with exercise, lighting, ventilation, and other basic standards of care.

Do you support or oppose this legislation?

	<u>STATE</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>DEMS</u>	<u>REPS</u>	<u>INDS</u>
SUPPORT	83%	81%	85%	86%	81%	82%
OPPOSE	7%	9%	5%	4%	10%	7%
UNDECIDED	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	11%

QUESTION: In January, a dog in Gary, Indiana, froze to death when her owner left her tied up outside overnight. Currently, under state law it is not considered animal neglect to deny an animal shelter from extreme temperatures.

Do you support or oppose legislation that would strengthen the animal cruelty statute by making it a crime of neglect to leave an animal outside in extreme temperatures?

	<u>STATE</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>DEMS</u>	<u>REPS</u>	<u>INDS</u>
SUPPORT	82%	77%	87%	88%	77%	81%
OPPOSE	11%	18%	4%	6%	16%	11%
UNDECIDED	7%	5%	9%	6%	7%	8%

QUESTION: Generally speaking, do you support or oppose state legislators' efforts to ensure humane treatment of animals, including increased penalties for abuse and providing adequate resources and authority for inspections and investigations concerning animal cruelty?

	<u>STATE</u>	<u>MEN</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>DEMS</u>	<u>REPS</u>	<u>INDS</u>
SUPPORT	90%	85%	95%	94%	88%	88%
OPPOSE	4%	6%	2%	1%	6%	5%
UNDECIDED	6%	9%	3%	5%	6%	7%