



2020 State Candidate Survey

1. Pennsylvania is considered the “Puppy Mill Capital of the East” and this year, six PA dog breeding businesses made the Humane Society of the United States’ “Horrible Hundred” list, which names the hundred worst puppy mills in the country. Further adding to the problem, the PA Dog Law Bureau of Enforcement does not have proper funding. While two bills have been introduced to help fund Dog Law (HB 1277, which would take the judiciary out of the Dog Law Fund, and SB 663, which would raise the dog license fee), it is likely not enough.

Will you support (or have you supported) these two bills, and what other assistance can you offer to help fund Dog Law? I will support these two bills, the money from fines levied for animal related offences should be allocated solely to addressing those issues. Have an arbitrary cap on the amount of money that can be kept from these fines works counter to working to solve the problem. I would like to see our state begin to be more vocal in advocacy for animals. This could be done through adoption events held through district offices and awareness campaigns. I know that is just a drop in the bucket of what needs to be done but it seems to me that it could be implemented the fastest.

What are your plans to eradicate puppy mills and unethical breeders in Pennsylvania?

I take an unusual approach to this which is likely attributable to my day job (stet revenue auditor). I think the quickest way to start going after these breeders is to first make them a targeted area for sales tax audits. I would like to see animals that are bred (by breeders) but unfortunately do not survive long enough to be adopted be subject to use tax. I know this comes off as a bit cold, but it creates at least some incentive for breeders to take better care of the animals. I would also like to see breeders subject to far more authority from the department of health. In the post COVID-19 world there are some advantages that can be used to go after breeders. There simply isn't enough oversight given to state agencies in regard to breeders. Lastly, I would like pet adoptions from animal rescues and shelters to be exempt from sales tax.

2. For decades, Pennsylvanians have been calling for an end to live pigeon shoots. We are the only state that still legally and openly holds these cruel killing contests. Year after year, a bill (SB 787 is the most recent) has been introduced to ban live pigeon shoots but has been denied a fair vote.

Will you support legislation to ban live pigeon shoots, and what can or will you do to ensure the bill receives a vote? I would support legislation to end live pigeon shoots. I think there is ground to be gained in this area. There are plenty of things that the hunting advocacy and firearms lobby groups would trade this for that don't involve cruelty to animals being carried out. As someone that has many ties to the hunting and firearms communities I feel I will be effective in bridging this divide.

3. Zoonotic outbreaks, including HIV, Ebola, mad cow disease, avian flu, measles, smallpox, and COVID-19, have all spread through the confinement, slaughter, and/or consumption of animals. Research shows that factory farms, which are rampant in Pennsylvania, are breeding grounds for killer pathogens because of the animals' genetic similarities and the overcrowding of animals. While animal agriculture has long been hailed as the second largest contributor to human-made greenhouse gas emissions, our current crisis is revealing it to be a serious threat to public health, as well.

What measures will you take to ensure that factory farms in Pennsylvania are operating using the safest and most humane methods possible? I think that a realistic way to get farmers on board with working to address this issue is to either offer matching grant funding for what farmers spend on making the conditions for the animals they raise more humane and livable or through other tax incentives offered for farmers that make improvements in this area.

Will you support legislation to improve standards in factory farms, such as banning gestation crates and/or battery cages (means of keeping pigs and chickens so small that they do not have adequate space to even turn around)? Yes I will.

4. Plastic pollution is a growing problem worldwide and in Western Pennsylvania. Humane Action Pittsburgh's No Plastic Please campaign works to end single-use plastic (i.e. straws, bottled water, throwaway plastic cutlery, and other items that are only used one time) wherever possible. Most of these items are not easily recyclable and are costing our region and the state millions of dollars to manage the contamination of recycling streams, litter pickup costs, and landfill tipping fees. The PA State Legislature has now twice passed a yearlong preemption rule that prevents PA communities from creating policies to manage this deluge of harmful plastic waste. This state preemption prohibits regulation, fees, or bans at the local level. Meanwhile, regulation in other states, including bottle-deposit systems, requirements for post-consumer

plastic content in products, and targeted bans and fees, are helping other communities greatly reduce their plastic waste and shift to more sustainable, responsible use of plastic.

Once I learned about the messy world of trash collection and recycling (pardon the pun) I was taken aback by how many things are not able to be recycled. Where I live in Allegheny county they don't even collect glass for recycling anymore. When it comes to plastic. A great way of putting recycled plastics to a practical use that I think everyone in PA universally supports is in road paving. Adding a relatively small amount of recycled plastics to asphalt mixtures increasing the strength, durability and longevity of paved roads. It also decreases the cost of the materials. This type of paving has had widespread success in many European countries for many years now.

Do you support or oppose preemption, and what are your plans to reduce or eliminate single-use plastic in Western Pennsylvania? I think individual counties and municipalities should have the freedom to decide if they want to regulate the use of single use plastics. There are a rapidly growing number of environmentally friendly alternatives to single use plastics on the market now. There just needs to be a push to get more companies to adopt them.