

## Animal Advocates Lobby Iowa Lawmakers for Humane Legislation

Written by Jordan Crump

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DES MOINES, Iowa (Feb. 13, 2012) – Citizens from across Iowa participating in Humane Lobby Day 2012 met with lawmakers today at the Capitol to urge them to support legislation to strengthen the standards for large-scale commercial dog breeding operations and oppose a resolution to overturn a science-based Natural Resources Commission rule banning the use of toxic lead shot during the state's new mourning dove hunting season. The Humane Society of the United States, ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) and The Iowa Federation of Humane Societies are sponsoring Humane Lobby Day.

“Animal advocates attending the 2012 Humane Lobby Day will remind state lawmakers that Iowans want to protect dogs from puppy mill cruelty and protect wildlife from toxic lead poisoning,” said Carol Griglione, The HSUS’ Iowa state director. “The Natural Resources Commission made a science-based decision not to allow toxic lead shot to poison our land and wildlife, and the legislature should not trump science with politics.”

Attendees will urge their representatives to support S.F. 2073, which is sponsored by Senator Matt McCoy (D- Polk County). This legislation would require commercial dog breeding facilities whose license has expired, been revoked, or relinquished to either sterilize or find new homes for all but three of their dogs within 45 days. This measure would fix a loophole in the law that allows unlicensed (but formerly licensed) commercial breeders to keep their dogs even after their license has been suspended. Members of Iowa Voters for Companion Animals were also on hand to support this legislation.

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“The ASPCA has seen first-hand the unspeakable cruelty and horrific conditions of puppy mills,” said Ann Church, vice president of state affairs for the ASPCA. “We’re thrilled with the number of supporters attending Humane Lobby Day and championing to enact stronger laws to regulate commercial breeders. It’s important for lawmakers to hear from their constituents and today’s event is a unique opportunity for animal advocates from across Iowa to meet with their legislators and be the voice for animals.”

These Iowan animal advocates also oppose Senate Joint Resolution 2001, which would overturn the recent Natural Resources Commission decision to prohibit the use of toxic lead shot for the newly-approved dove hunting season. Senate Joint Resolution 2001 was recently approved in the House and will soon be debated in the Senate. The HSUS and the ASPCA® oppose SJR 2001 because animals suffer and sometimes die from lead poisoning through inadvertently consuming the spent lead ammunition. Hunters have non-lead ammunition alternatives that are equally accurate and inexpensive, and have been required by law for waterfowl hunting for two decades.

Iowa ranks 21st in The HSUS’ 2011 state animal protection rankings, which grades each state based on a wide range of animal protection laws dealing with pets, animal cruelty and fighting, wildlife, animals in research, horses and farm animals. The state gained points for its strong animal fighting laws, but ranks near the middle of the pack because of relatively weak animal cruelty laws.

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