

Trump Blocks Access to Puppy Mill Inspections

The Tampa Bay Times attempted to obtain information on the results of the USDA inspections for the facilities of 15 puppy mills that supply puppies to pet stores in the Tampa, Florida area last May. Any citizen trying to make sure they buy puppies from trusted breeders could have looked up this information in minutes on the USDA's website during the Obama administration. It tooks nine months to get an answer with the current administration in power. When the USDA finally replied the answer was pages of totally blacked-out material.

It took nine months, but the reply arrived last week: 54 pages of total blackout."

Every word of every inspection – from the date to the violations – were redacted from the documents provided." – Tampa Bay Times

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The main reason for this redaction: the USDA beneath Trump currently says that providing "personnel and medical files" will "constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy."

For those of you familiar with the types of abuses that can take place at puppy mills, even those regularly inspected by the Department of Agriculture, that statement goes against every reason for conducting inspections in the first place. Animal abuse, injuries to the animals, use of expired medicine, unsanitary conditions detrimental to the health of the puppies, all are conditions that the agency has found.

Lax laws have allowed these despicable outfits to remain in operation for years, and it's only recently that many (but not all) states have begun cracking down on them. The conditions some of the dogs are kept in is horrendous, amounting to little more than torture camps, all in the name of cranking out as many purebred puppies as possible to sell for a profit.

Florida right now is that the Republican-controlled legislature is considering a Republican-sponsored bill to prevent local municipalities from banning the sale of dogs from any breeder that is licensed by the USDA.

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With no information on the track records of these licensed breeders, however, the bill ensures that pet businesses can't be shut down by local officials for any reason, even animal abuse, as long as they keep their USDA license. And with no way of getting access to the USDA data on the puppy breeders, consumers will have no way of knowing if they are buying a lovingly raised healthy puppy or an unhealthy, disease-ridden, abused animal that will require costly veterinary treatment and display behavioral problems.

Even the lobbyist for the Florida pet stores pushing for the bill thinks that the lack of transparency in the Trump administration's new policy is misguided at the very least.

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