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## Victoria's Law pushed in Lehigh County to end puppy mills in Pa.

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Pennsylvania state Sen. Lisa Boscola, D-Lehigh/Northampton, looks on as Grace Kelly Herbert, of Finding Shelter Animal Rescue, speaks Friday, March 19, 2021, at the Lehigh County Humane Society in Allentown. Herbert, seen holding Ollie on the left and Little Tooch on the right, rescued a German shepherd named Victoria, the inspiration for Senate Bill 234 -- Victoria's Law -- that seeks to stop the sale of puppy mill dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores, and protect consumers from misleading sales tactics. Kurt Bresswein | For lehighvalleylive.com

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By [Kurt Bresswein](#) | [For lehighvalleylive.com](#)

Grace Kelly Herbert stepped to the microphone Friday clutching two tiny rescue dogs, Ollie and Little Tooch, and rattled off their list of ailments.

“It’s a miracle that they’ve lived to 9 years old,” she said.

Both were surrendered by a puppy mill in Missouri to a rescue and belong to Herbert. She is able to care for them as president and co-founder of Finding Shelter Animal Rescue in Southeastern Pennsylvania, supported by a network of veterinarians. It also helps that her husband works at a specialty veterinary hospital.

Herbert also took on the care of Victoria, a German shepherd who was a puppy mill breeder for a decade.

Herbert was in [Allentown](#) on Friday to join state lawmakers and animal rescuers at the [Lehigh County Humane Society](#) in support of Pennsylvania [Senate Bill 234](#) — Victoria’s Law — that aims to put puppy mills out of business.

“When I was called to have her surrendered to me by the puppy mill producer, he confirmed that her first litter she had over 15 puppies,” Herbert said of Victoria. “And he said, ‘If she was still able to stand for me to breed her then I would continue to breed her because she produced such big litters and she made me a lot of money.’ Came right out of his mouth.”

Victoria died Feb. 26, 2019, and Herbert and her family made her a promise to fight for an end to puppy mills.

“Senate Bill 234 was introduced with the intention of driving Pennsylvania’s pet market towards humane sources like shelters, rescues, responsible breeders -- and stop the sale of puppy mill dogs, cats, rabbits in pet stores, and protect consumers from misleading sale tactics,” said state Sen. Lisa

Boscola, D-Lehigh/Northampton, a co-sponsor of the legislation. “This bill would also require advertisers to include license numbers on their advertisements to make it easier to hold those breeders accountable, by identifying inhumane and unregistered breeders in our state.”

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The idea is to promote partnerships between pet stores and animal shelters and rescues, instead of with puppy mills.

“They will only be able to offer animals for adoption, helping organizations like the Humane Society, guaranteeing that pet stores would provide space for dogs, cats and rabbits from animal-care facilities or animal rescue organizations to promote for adoption,” Boscola continued. “This legislation would not impact responsible breeders in Pennsylvania. In fact, breeders as a whole are against having pet stores sell their animals because they want to meet the buyer and provide them with healthy, socialized dogs in particular.”



Yogurt, a dog up for adoption at the Lehigh County Humane Society, attends a news conference Friday, March 19, 2021, at the Allentown shelter calling for passage of Senate Bill 234, known as Victoria's Law, which seeks to stop the sale of puppy mill dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores, and protect consumers from misleading sales tactics. Kurt Bresswein | For lehighvalleylive.com

The bill is before the Senate Judiciary Committee, which is where a similar bill during the 2019-20 legislative session languished without passage.

Boscola said the new bill has bipartisan support. She was joined Friday by two fellow Lehigh County Democratic lawmakers, state Reps. Jeanne McNeill and Peter Schweyer, in pushing for passage of Victoria’s Law.

Gov. Tom Wolf has committed to signing it into law if it reaches his desk, said Roy Afflerbach, a former state senator and Allentown mayor. In semi-retirement, he represents the Humane Society of the United States, and he asked residents to call their lawmakers in support of Victoria’s Law and shutting puppy mills down.

Kristen Tullo, Pennsylvania state director for the Humane Society of the United States, urged anyone who believes they were sold a misrepresented or sick pet to contact the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office. The office has an email set up for complaints, [petscams@attorneygeneral.gov](mailto:petscams@attorneygeneral.gov).



Grace Kelly Herbert, a founder of Finding Shelter Animal Rescue, talks to Victoria during a visit Jan. 28, 2019, to the Pennsylvania Capitol in Harrisburg to help gather lawmaker support for Victoria's Law. Dan Gleiter file photo | For pennlive.com

Victoria, by the time she was rescued, was paralyzed as a result of a genetic, neurological disorder called Degenerative Myelopathy, a disease she passed down to the estimated 150-200 puppies she produced while at the puppy mill.

“A pet is a member of the family,” Afflerbach said inside the Lehigh County Humane Society. “Many people go out and purchase the dog from a rescue situation such as this or a cat or a rabbit because their children want to have a pet. Can you imagine how a child feels if the family brings home a pet from one of these stores, one of these puppy mills, that two weeks later has to be put down because it’s got some serious illness or a month later ends up with a serious illness that requires finances beyond what the family has?”

“That’s what we’re really working at here folks. It’s consumer protection as much as it’s kindness to animals.”

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