



Wisconsin Puppy Mill Project Fact Sheet:



Humane Minded: Childhood Learning and Belittling Tags

By Eilene Ribbens, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Puppy Mill Project

*I am in favor of animal rights as well as human rights. That is the way of the whole human being.
— Abraham Lincoln*



As director of the Wisconsin Puppy Mill Project, I have talked to numerous state and local leaders in an effort to educate them about the horrors of pet profiteers. Many of them view our anti-pupppymill advocacy as nothing more than the work of "a small bunch of animal rights activists."

Why is the term "animal rights activist" so frequently used in an attempt to belittle and marginalize humane-minded people? As children, we are taught in school, in church and in scouts to be actively "kind to animals." Scout troops give children merit badges for animal work...our whole culture tries to teach children kindness.

But when we, as adults who learned our childhood lessons well, speak out for animals and express the "humane-ness" that has become ingrained into our personalities...we are labeled as crazy, "humaniacs," or tagged as "animal rights activists" as if our advocacy were a disease. This is a sad and tragic aspect of our culture...that humane people have to defend their very spirit of kindness...and to those who "represent" us, at that.

People who speak and work for animals are in the company of great scholars like Jane Goodall and Albert Schweitzer, great authors like Mathew Scully, and great statesmen like Mohandas Gandhi and Abraham Lincoln. I am far more comfortable in their company than in that of any "leader" who would belittle our efforts with trite tags and insulting labels. I am satisfied knowing that we understand natural beauty, incredible loyalty and unconditional love from animals.

And I, for one, could do without "representation" from those who view compassion as a liability. Why would anyone want to follow leaders who would discredit us for being "humane?"

NOTE: Please ask your elected representatives (or candidates for those jobs) where they stand on pet mills and other "humane" issues – and let them know that their answers matter to you!