

House Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities Committee

Public Hearing Agenda – HB 1816 Pet Shop-Kennel Act

February 24, 2026

10:00am

523 Irvis Office Building

Call to Order

Chairman Burgos

Opening Remarks

Majority Chairman Burgos

Republican Chairman, Rep. Metzgar

Bill Sponsor, Rep. McNeill

Panel #1

Ariel Lefkovits, Public Policy Specialist, Humane World for Animals.

Dr. Melissa Resnik, Veterinarian.

Grace Kelly Herbet, Finding Shelter Animal Rescue.

Panel #2

Dr. Andrea Honigmann, President, Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association.

Alyssa Miller, Vice President, Government Affairs, Pet Advocacy Network.

Chip Kohser, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Member, Beaver County.

Member Q and A

Any Other Business

Adjournment



Formerly called the Humane
Society of the United States and
Humane Society International

February 3, 2026

Representative Danilo Burgos, Chair
Representative Carl Walker Metzgar, Chair
House Consumer Protection, Technology & Utilities Committee
Pennsylvania State Capitol
501 N 3rd St, Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: On behalf of Humane World for Animals and our passionate Pennsylvania supporters, we urge you to support HB 1816, Representative McNeill's "Victoria's Law."

Dear Chair Burgos, Chair Metzgar, and members of the House Consumer Protection, Technology & Utilities Committee,

Background

This common sense, compassionate legislation puts an end to the incredibly cruel puppy mill-to-pet shop pipeline, protects consumers from deceptive sales tactics, sick puppy sales, and predatory puppy loans, while promoting responsible breeders and humane businesses. Victoria's Law has been introduced in Pennsylvania for the past several sessions. It is time to do right by animals and consumers and ensure it becomes law.

Pennsylvania would join eight states (New York, Maryland, Maine, Vermont, Illinois, California, Washington and Oregon) that prohibit the sale of dogs and cats in pet shops. These laws are working as intended and meeting their animal welfare and consumer protection goals.

HB 1816 codifies into state law what is already in place in 15 Pennsylvania localities: Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Wilksburg, Sharpsburg, Bellevue, Monessen, Allentown, Easton, Forks Township, Bethlehem, Boro of Doylestown, New Britain Boro, West Norriton, Abington, and West Chester.

Animal welfare benefits of HB 1816.

The bill will end the puppy mill-to-pet shop pipeline that is a nightmare for the parent dogs trapped in mass breeding facilities and the weeks-old puppies that are transported and sold like mere products. The data does not lie. Public records show that Pennsylvania pet stores source puppies from massive, inhumane commercial breeders and brokers, many with terrible animal welfare records. Please see [examples from Pennsylvania's Puppy Mill-to-Pet Shop Pipeline document](#).

Laws prohibiting the sale of puppies in pet shops have had a noticeable impact on puppy mills, with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) records showing an estimated 550,000 fewer puppies now born into USDA puppy mills than in 2020—a 44% decrease. The total number of puppy mills licensed to sell to pet stores has decreased by about 420 dealers—an estimated 15% decline since 2020. This includes some puppy mills that have appeared in our [Horrible Hundred reports](#). Shrinking demand for puppies born into federally licensed mass breeding facilities is crucial because USDA oversight of this industry amounts to little more than federally sanctioned cruelty. Licensed breeders can legally confine dogs in stacked, wire cages only six inches larger than themselves for their entire lives, denying them exercise and basic veterinary care, and breeding them at every heat cycle. Enforcement of these shockingly low standards is abysmal.

- See [The Cruel Reality of USDA Puppy Mills](#) for more information.

Consumer protection benefits of HB 1816.

The bill will stop pet shops' deceptive sales tactics. If they were honest about where their puppies came from, and the health and behavior deck stacked against them, they'd have no customers. The bill will also prevent Pennsylvania consumers from ending up with sick and genetically compromised pet store puppies, high veterinary bills, and sometimes the heartache of their new pet dying. At Humane World, we receive a constant stream of complaints from pet shop customers who are financially and emotionally devastated after purchasing a sick pet store puppy.

The bill will also stop Pennsylvanians who cannot afford a puppy outright from being pushed into signing predatory puppy loans. *Pennsylvania pet shop customers have ended up with interest rates above 150%*. A Petland Monroeville customer who thought she was getting a deal on a slightly older, discounted puppy, wrote of her experience in a Better Business Bureau (BBB) complaint: "After applying for financing I was approved and I unfortunately signed the finance agreement on the spot without being fully aware of all the terms, which included a **151.98% interest rate!** It was a very emotional time period for me as I had my 11 year old daughter with me who was begging for the puppy and distracting me - which I'm sure they knew and took advantage of...". And, as the [National Consumer Law Center](#) warns, puppy stores often push loans through third party lenders that partner with federal banks to evade state usury laws.

Business benefits of HB 1816.

This legislation promotes humane pet businesses. Hundreds of Pennsylvania pet stores are thriving on a pet products and services model and won't be impacted by this bill because they already do not sell puppies. Victoria's Law would require 32 puppy mill retailers to phase out the sale of dogs and cats and transition to a more humane business model.

The bill includes a delayed effective date, giving impacted pet shops until January 1, 2027 to sell the puppies they have and transition to a humane business model. Last year, according to the [American Pet Products Association](#), Americans spent \$152 billion on their pets, with food, treats, and product spending dominating, along with in-demand services, like grooming and boarding.

New York stores and others across the nation prove that humane pet shop laws merely require stores to adapt and find a new niche. Stores that formally sold puppies are now thriving as pet salons focused on grooming, daycare/boarding centers, or boutique pet supply shops.

HB 1816 merely requires stores to cut ties with puppy mills. Humane World and other supporters of the bill are here to help pet shops transition to a new model.

Humane pet acquisition benefits of HB 1816.

Pennsylvania residents will be able to find the pet of their choice from the region's large network of shelters, rescues (including breed specific rescues) and responsible breeders who only sell directly to consumers. Current pet shop customers want to meet a puppy in person before purchase and are thus far more likely to adopt from a shelter or rescue, or seek out a responsible breeder they visit in person, than to buy a dog online. At [Humane World](#), we provide resources for those looking to buy a puppy and remind them that a dog will likely live 10 to 20 years, so it's well worth investing some time now to be sure you're working with a responsible breeder who breeds healthy, happy dogs.

A core tenant of responsible breeding is only selling puppies directly to the public. As the [American Kennel Club](#) states: "A responsible dog breeder makes sure that their puppies go to good homes. This means careful screening and evaluation of each person or family interested in getting a puppy." Further, they "answer questions, provide resources, and assist with problems that may come up." None of this is possible when breeders sell puppies through third parties like pet shops.

Responsible breeders often belong to breed clubs, and most of them do not allow members to sell puppies to pet shops. For instance, the national breed club for the nation's most popular dog breed,

the [French Bull Dog Club of America](#), states in its code of ethics: “I will not sell a French Bulldog to any non-standard breeder, puppy broker, pet store...or any other commercial enterprise.”

Stopping the sale of puppies in pet shops is long overdue.

Year after year, Pennsylvania pet stores have had the opportunity to show they can sell puppies in an ethical manner. Instead, they continue to source from awful puppy mills that no Pennsylvanian would *knowingly* support, deceive consumers, sell sick puppies, and engage in predatory lending. As other states have also learned the hard way, the puppy mill-to-pet shop pipeline is too broken to merely regulate. There is just no right way to do the wrong thing.

HB 1816 puts forth a proven, targeted solution with broad public support. **It will prohibit the only unethical source for puppies that is currently rewarded with storefronts.** Despite fearmongering from opposition, there is no evidence that these laws increase “black market” or “unregulated” puppy sales. Online puppy sellers have been federally regulated since 2013. At the same time humane pet shop laws expanded, commercial breeding significantly declined. If bans merely shifted sales elsewhere, puppy mill numbers would not be falling.

We respectfully ask you to support HB 1816.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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February 3, 2026

Representative Danilo Burgos, Chair
Representative Carl Walker Metzgar, Chair
House Consumer Protection, Technology & Utilities Committee
Pennsylvania State Capitol
501 N 3rd St, Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: **VETERINARY SUPPORT for HB 1816 (McNeill), “Victoria’s Law.”**

Dear Chair Burgos, Chair Metzgar, and members of the House Consumer Protection, Technology & Utilities Committee,

On behalf of the Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance (HumaneVMA), I would like to express our strong support for House Bill 1816, also known as Victoria's Law. I have worked as a shelter veterinarian in Philadelphia for the last fifteen years, primarily in the city's large open-admission municipal shelter. I also serve the public's pets in multiple low-cost medical and surgical clinics.

I have provided medical and surgical care to thousands of dogs, cats, and rabbits relinquished to shelters by owners who were unable to afford their pet's medical care. I regularly witness the heartbreak of owners who surrender their pets, and the scared and confused shelter animals as they desperately search for their former family members. In low-cost clinics I hear despairing tales from people who didn't anticipate or plan for the expensive treatment their pet store purchase requires.

Most dogs sold in pet stores are sourced from puppy mills where inadequate provision is made for the health and welfare of the animals. I see countless puppies purchased from pet stores who present with life-threatening illness because of improper vaccination, congenital diseases, and behavior disorders due to improper socialization and bad genetics.

Well-intentioned customers are often uneducated about the source of the puppies, as well as the genetic problems of various dog breeds that will later require expensive veterinary care. Inadequately vaccinated kittens and puppies can result in their illness that can then cost thousands of dollars to treat. When owners cannot afford this care, they are relinquished to overburdened shelters, or they must make the difficult choice of economic euthanasia.

Unlike those from pet stores, animals adopted from shelters are properly vaccinated and spayed or neutered, which prevents illnesses that are costly to treat. If for some reason an adopter cannot keep the pet, they can be returned to the shelter to find a new home; that is not an option in pet stores.

Breeders who supply animals to pet stores put profit over the health and welfare of the animals. Breeding dogs are not screened for genetic diseases which results in young dogs developing severe joint disease and arthritis, and brachycephalic (flat-faced) breeds who struggle to breathe. While many think shelters are full of mixed breed dogs, I have seen an increase in purebred dogs such as French bulldogs and huskies over the years. Additionally, increasing numbers of pet rabbits are also being relinquished to shelters or abandoned outdoors. Rabbits purchased in pet stores often end up in homes without receiving the appropriate care unique to that species. Most people are also unaware of the cost of an exotics veterinarian since most veterinary practices are limited to dogs and cats.



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Victoria's Law would encourage pet stores to partner with local shelters and rescues to promote adoption of homeless animals. Many pet stores have gained more customers after the transition to a humane sourcing model. I have met countless pet owners who, when given the opportunity to adopt animals from shelters, tell me how rewarding it is. These partnerships not only help pets find homes, but they also create space for incoming animals and increase the community's awareness about homeless animals.

Alongside shelter staff I work tirelessly to ease the suffering of countless animals. As more animals enter rather than exit shelters, even healthy animals are at risk of euthanasia. It is daunting and emotional work. Anything that can be done to staunch the flow of animals into shelters will help us. We cannot spay and neuter our way out of this. We cannot adopt our way out of this either. Restricting the retail sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits would have a substantial impact on the number of animals entering shelters and rescues and alleviate some of the burden on these entities.

Enacting Victoria's Law is the least we can do. Let's make it easier for animal lovers to do the right thing and 'adopt instead of shop.' I urge you to add Pennsylvania to the growing list of states that have enacted similar laws that improve both animal and human welfare by supporting HB 1816.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Resnick".

Melissa Resnick, DVM
melissa.resnick@gmail.com

Pennsylvania Licensed Veterinarian
Pennsylvania State Representative, Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance (HumaneVMA)

**Written Testimony Before the Pennsylvania House Consumer Protection, Technology
and Utilities Commission
Grace Kelly – Finding Shelter Animal Rescue
February 3, 2026**

Chair Burgos and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Grace Kelly, and I am the President and co-founder of Finding Shelter Animal Rescue in Norristown, PA. I am here to share my perspective on HB 1816, which I strongly support because of its direct impact on Pennsylvania consumers seeking to add a pet to their family.

Personal Connection

This issue is not abstract for me—it's personal. My work with Finding Shelter Animal Rescue and in the animal welfare space has shown me firsthand, for nearly two decades, the challenges and rewards that come with helping families and pets find each other. Every day, I witness how important it is for prospective pet owners to have access to safe, ethical options when choosing to add a new animal companion to their lives. These experiences, both positive and negative, have shaped my strong support for HB 1816 and my belief in its potential to make a meaningful difference for people and animals across the Commonwealth.

Sixteen years ago, shortly after founding Finding Shelter Animal Rescue, I began receiving calls directly from Pennsylvania dog breeders. They were looking for placement for the dogs they no longer wanted. Since 2010, I have personally rescued approximately 10,000 dogs and puppies, over 100 cats and kittens, and a bunny across the Commonwealth. Just me in my van, driving place to place, to pick up animals in need and helping them get into the safety of a foster home or with one of my many trusted, reputable rescue and shelter contacts. Not one cent has ever been paid for their release, but I can tell you that the cost of their medical care after rescue is astronomical. I have personally welcomed hundreds of these animals into my rescue and home over the years as foster pets, even adopting a few of them myself. From physical health to behavioral health, we have had our fair share of challenges and expenses. We have also had a few puppy deaths from hours to just days after their rescue despite every effort through hospitalized critical care to save them. We were left with nothing but a small box of ashes and hefty invoices to pay. All I could think was, imagine if this was an unsuspecting family with children whose new puppy died? What if that death occurred outside of the Puppy Lemon Law window?

I've seen with my own eyes how these animals were living prior to being sold via various outlets, one of them being pet stores. These experiences opened my eyes to the urgent need for protecting Pennsylvania consumers and, as an added benefit, helping the animals who are part of the profit-centered, pet store trade. Remember, I see them before they go to the pet stores. I see the parents, the siblings, the conditions in which they are kept, how they are handled, if they have access to fresh food and clean water,

all the things a pet store shopper will never see. Because if any consumer saw the things that I see, they would not spend a penny let alone thousands of dollars to purchase that animal. They would know from seeing it with their own eyes that they would be taking a tremendous risk with their purchase monetarily and that their family should not take an emotional chance on that animal. The price is too high to pay and truly believe that they would not wish to pay into a cycle of cruelty.

Why This Matters

The stakes are high. For example:

- Nearly 94 million American households have at least one pet.
- 60.6% of Pennsylvania residents own pets.
- According to the American Pet Products Association, “The pet industry shows continued growth and resiliency, with the total U.S. pet industry expenditures reaching \$152 billion in 2024.”

These statistics underscore the profound impact your decision on HB 1816 will have. With millions of households in Pennsylvania and across the country sharing their lives with pets, the outcomes of this legislation reach far beyond numbers—they touch the everyday experiences of families, friends, and community members. The choices made here will directly influence the well-being of both consumers and their beloved animals, shaping not just financial realities, but also the quality of life for countless individuals and companions throughout our Commonwealth.

Proposed Solution

H.B. 1816 offers a practical, evidence-based path forward to protect Pennsylvania consumers with the added benefits of transparency for prospective pet owners and helping to reduce the demand, commonly through impulse purchases, for animals bred under questionable conditions. It will, for example, help ensure that families who purchase and adopt pets are less likely to face unexpected medical expenses, protect children and other vulnerable family members from potentially unhealthy or unsafe animals, and support responsible breeders and rescues who prioritize animal welfare. By eliminating pet store puppy, kitten, and rabbit sales where the animal’s parents are not present and requiring higher standards for animal care and transparency in the pet trade, HB 1816 can reduce the risk of heartbreak and financial strain for Pennsylvania families, improve the overall safety and health of pets entering homes, and empower consumers to make more informed, ethical choices. I believe this approach is both compassionate and fiscally responsible.

Addressing Concerns

I recognize that there are apprehensions regarding the potential impact on the 39 Pennsylvania businesses affected by this bill should they be required to cease the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits. Nevertheless, this transition presents significant

opportunities for pet stores to collaborate with reputable local rescues and shelters through meet and greet events, partner with veterinarians for affordable vaccine clinics, provide training and grooming services, expand into online sales, and continue engaging with the local community in-store. These partnerships have the potential to strengthen business models rather than undermine them. This initiative is focused on pragmatic solutions, not political considerations.

Closing Appeal

In closing, I urge you to support H.B. 1816. The decision you make today will ripple far beyond this room—it will shape the lives of people like me, my family and friends here in Pennsylvania, and countless others across the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to listening to the voices of those you represent. I am happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully,

Grace Kelly
Finding Shelter Animal Rescue
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References:

<https://www.petage.com/the-state-of-the-pet-industry-2025-report/>

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/pet-ownership-statistics-by-state>

<https://americanpetproducts.org/news/the-american-pet-products-association-appa-releases-2025-state-of-the-industry-report>

<https://animaladvocacyacademy.com/understanding-retail-pet-sale-bans-what-they-do-and-why-they-matter/>



PENNSYLVANIA VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Good morning, Chairman Burgos, Minority Chairman Metzgar, and members of the House Consumer Protection, Technology, and Utilities Committee. My name is Andrea Honigmann, and I am a practicing small animal veterinarian in western Pennsylvania. I am currently serving as the President of the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the organization.

The Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association is PA's only statewide professional membership organization for the veterinary profession representing over 3,400 veterinarians, certified veterinary technicians, assistants, practice managers, and other support staff. Our mission is to ensure the vitality of the profession by promoting excellence in veterinary medicine, advancing animal health and welfare, and protecting and enhancing human health.

The PVMA issues the following statement regarding our concerns and opposition to House Bill 1816, which would ***ban the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits by pet stores in Pennsylvania.***

- **The PVMA is in support of efforts to directly improve the humane treatment of dogs, cats and pet rabbits in Pennsylvania,** particularly through increased strengthening, funding and enforcement of our existing Pennsylvania Dog Laws, which this General Assembly did by passing Senate Bill 746, now Act 47, in 2024. Act 47 increased dog license fees; increased fines for violations; improved consumer transparency, public safety and animal welfare. PVMA and many other stakeholder groups supported this legislation. This bill included provisions to require pet shops and kennels offering dogs for sale/adoption to display specific information including: The dog's identity; Breeder location and

state/federal license number; and documentation of inoculation, vaccination, and medical treatment and bite history (if any).

- The PVMA supports the enforcement of these regulations against commercial breeders, rescues, shelters, or any bad actors who are selling, breeding, kenneling or housing dogs, not in compliance with these important laws. **House Bill 1816 does not impose any new or enhanced penalties targeting unlicensed kennels, meaning it does nothing to deter or shut down illegal breeding operations that already operate outside the law. Because unlicensed kennels are not regulated or inspected, eliminating licensed pet shops will not affect these bad actors. In addition, HB 1816 creates a new statutory framework with definitions that differ from existing Pennsylvania animal and dog laws, increasing the likelihood of confusion, inconsistent enforcement, and unintended legal conflicts.**
- Many of our members are actively engaged in the practice of veterinary medicine in the state. We are in the trenches, observing first-hand the sometimes appalling and irresponsible keeping, kenneling and breeding of pets. The reality is **these woeful animals can and do come from anywhere, including private breeders and rescues, and not solely from pet shops.** Campylobacter and parvovirus outbreaks can and do occur anywhere that animals are kenneled, or where new animals are constantly introduced to a population, regardless of where the pet is purchased or adopted.
- Many unhealthy pets are bred here in Pennsylvania, by illegal, unlicensed breeders. But make no mistake – many of these sick and ill-treated animals enter the state through internet sales, brokers, agents and rescues. **Our fear is that more animals will come into Pennsylvania from out of state breeding sources and animal auctions, over which the Commonwealth’s Department of Agriculture has little to no control.**
- **PVMA is concerned that prohibiting the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores will push consumers further into the grasp of online sales.** These online sites engage in the most **misleading consumer practices**

and false advertising. Dog brokers are extremely well-versed in hoodwinking consumers into thinking they are buying from a private, responsible breeder or from a reputable, accredited rescue when nothing could be further from the truth. They provide literature that appears to show bucolic family farms, but it's very targeted marketing and sustained by online ads that offer images of healthy puppies. Very often, these puppies are sickly upon purchase or shortly thereafter, and owners are left completely unaware of what they have actually purchased or where the pet was sourced from. There should be very stiff criminal penalties imposed on organizations that are falsely representing animals as rescues, as this is another way in which consumers are being defrauded.

- The PVMA is concerned with the lack of data that shows retail pet stores are selling animals from “puppy mills”. At the end of the day, we are the healers of your beloved dogs, cats and other pets, but we are also scientists, engaged in the practice of medicine, where evidence and fact must have a place. **Simply put, there is no real evidence or data that only irresponsible or bad breeders sell their pups to retail pet stores. There are no hard facts to support the claim that banning the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores will make any difference to illegal kennels or cut off their source of revenue.**
- House Bill 1816 diverts attention from the real problem. It does not punish or shut down illegal or unlicensed kennels “puppy mills”; instead, it eliminates regulated pet stores. **Any concerns about pet store sales should be addressed through existing regulatory and enforcement mechanisms rather than through a blanket prohibition on the sale of certain animals.**
- PVMA is focused on strengthening and enforcing Pennsylvania’s existing Dog Laws. Bad breeders must be held accountable, and irresponsible breeding practices should be subject to meaningful regulation, fines, and criminal prosecution when violations are repeated or egregious. **Act 47 of 2024 represents an important first step, and PVMA supports the work of the Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement.**

- PVMA recognizes that **animals can suffer from inhumane conditions which may lead to health and behavioral issues and that this is not limited to breeding facilities.** These issues may exist in sheltered and rescued animals, and we cannot presume that all health and behavioral issues will be known nor that this legislation will curtail that. Adopting a rescue animal comes with the same unknowns – often more unknowns – as these animals may come from out of state breeders and public auctions.

As the healers, advocates and caretakers of animals, PVMA's members are fortunate to share our lives with them. We are honored that the public entrusts us with the happiness and health of these tremendously important members of the household. Sometimes, at the end of the day, the love of a pet is all you may have to come home to and the emotional bond is significant between pet owners and their four-legged family members. We owe it to the Commonwealth's citizens and pets to do the very best we can for them. For us, that means taking the most direct approach, with the limited resources at our disposal.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.



February 13, 2026

RE: House Bill 1816 – Ban on the Sale of Cats, Dogs and Rabbits

Dear Chairperson Burgos and members of the House Consumer Protection, Technology & Utilities Committee,

As the advocacy voice of the responsible pet care community, the Pet Advocacy Network represents the interests and expertise of retailers, companion animal suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, pet owners, and others involved in the many aspects of pet care across the United States. Our association promotes animal well-being and responsible pet ownership, fosters environmental stewardship, and ensures healthy pets' availability through our local, state, and federal work. In addition, we routinely advocate for legislative and regulatory proposals to protect the health, safety, and availability of companion animals.

On behalf of the responsible pet care community, we ask that you **vote NO on House Bill 1816**, an act that would ban the sale of dogs and cats in licensed and regulated retail pet stores.

Pet stores are subject to stringent regulations, including regular inspections, licensing requirements, and adherence to animal welfare standards. These regulations ensure that the animals are healthy, well-cared for, and sold with a guarantee that protects the consumer. Families who purchase pets from regulated pet stores benefit from transparency and accountability, knowing that they are acquiring their new companions from a trustworthy and professional source.

Furthermore, pet stores provide valuable consumer education on pet care, ensuring that new pet owners are well-informed and prepared to take on the responsibilities of pet ownership. This consumer protection exists only for animals that come from pet stores – giving families a level of protection that does not exist anywhere else, even though animals that come from shelters and rescues do in fact become ill, often catch illnesses during their time at a shelter, and have congenital disorders that are discovered after being brought home.

While well-intentioned, retail pet sale bans will not stop bad breeders who are unregulated, unlicensed, and are not held accountable to any animal care standards.

In California, which has a statewide ban, the unregulated, underground puppy market has now thrived. A 2024 investigation by The Los Angeles Times revealed that thousands of these puppies, often purchased online, at rest stops or from those claiming to be local “hobby breeders”, come from breeders that the well-regulated pet stores do not, and cannot work with. These puppies are coming from breeders with animal welfare violations including severe neglect, overcrowding, and poor veterinary care. In one instance, puppies infected with parvovirus were knowingly transported without treatment, endangering both the puppies and their eventual owners.

Veterinarians in California, citing the statewide ban, saw an increase in consumers purchasing sick dogs from unregulated sources shortly after the state banned the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits at pet stores, and

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without the consumer protection that came with purchasing a pet from a regulated pet store, families were left paying enormous veterinary bills, and in some cases, families never received the dog they paid for.¹

Without pet stores to personally interact with and select their new pet, families may turn to these unregulated online sources, where they could fall victim to the “puppy scams” that have surged in recent years—tricked into sending unrecoverable money for a nonexistent dog.

While there are reputable and responsible online sellers, the Better Business Bureau has stated that fake online puppy sellers and puppy scams have dramatically increased by 39 percent since 2017, and up to 80 percent of sponsored online ads for puppies may be fake.² Victims of these puppy scams often have no legal recourse because they purchased from a source without regulatory oversight and without a purchase warranty to protect them.

Pennsylvania state law has been strong in ensuring that these substandard breeders cannot work with anyone in the state, however, as we have seen in other states and localities where these bans have been imposed, bad breeders and illegal backyard breeders end up thriving

Current law emphasizes traceability, veterinary oversight, and consumer protection. In addition to licensing and inspections, dog law requires robust recordkeeping and health documentation tied to the sale of dogs, including:

- Veterinary health certificates or written health guarantees
- Disclosure of breeder and animal health information
- Buyer remedies if an animal is found to be ill or congenitally compromised within defined timeframes

These consumer protection provisions create traceability and accountability that simply do not exist in unregulated online marketplaces, backyard breeding operations, or informal person-to-person sales and HB 1816 would eliminate one of the only pet acquisition channels where:

- The seller is known and licensed
- The source breeder is identifiable
- Records are required
- Inspections are routine
- Enforcement is possible

Enforcement—not prohibition—is the appropriate policy solution. If the concern is bad actors, Pennsylvania law already provides the appropriate tools:

- Inspections to identify violations
- Penalties and license revocation to remove noncompliant operators
- Authority to seize animals when welfare is at risk

¹ Puppy dies four hours after SD family buys it, Vets say new law may be part of the problem, <https://www.10news.com/news/team-10/puppy-dies-four-hours-after-sd-family-buys-it-vets-say-new-law-may-be-part-of-the-problem>

² <https://www.bbb.org/all/scamstudies/puppy-scams/puppy-scams-full-study>

HB 1816 does not strengthen these tools. It does not add inspectors, raise care standards, close enforcement gaps, or improve breeder oversight. Instead, it removes regulated pet stores from the system entirely, while leaving unregulated and difficult-to-police channels untouched.

As demonstrated in other states, eliminating licensed pet stores does not stop irresponsible breeding—it pushes sales underground, increases reliance on online transactions, fuels puppy scams, and reduces animal welfare outcomes by removing regulated, inspectable points of sale.

Pennsylvania’s existing framework already accomplishes what HB 1816 claims to do by:

- Regulating the breeders that sell into the commercial market
- Ensuring humane care standards through licensing and inspections
- Protecting consumers through disclosure and warranty requirements
- Maintaining traceability from breeder to buyer

Rather than dismantling this system, policymakers should focus on enforcing and strengthening existing law, which has already made Pennsylvania a national leader in kennel regulation and animal welfare oversight.

Pet stores and the licensed, responsible breeders they work with are a highly regulated, best-in-class source of pets that have been raised under federal and state care standards and are inspected regularly, provided veterinary exams, and keep detailed records of the condition and care of their animals:

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) established and enforces humane care standards under the federal government’s Animal Welfare Act that regulate the transportation, purchase, sale, housing, care, handling, and treatment of animals for use as pets.
- Breeders with five or more breeding females not USDA-licensed, are prohibited from selling to pet stores.
- USDA-licensed breeders are routinely inspected to ensure they follow humane standards for veterinary care, shelter, food, and clean water.
- State laws regarding animal care and warranties also regulate pet stores. They must keep records related to health, veterinary care, and the source of the animals they sell.

Beyond the legal requirements, our members in Pennsylvania feel a responsibility for the animals themselves. They work with families to find the ideal pets for their situations because that is the best way to ensure successful lifelong pet relationships and keep pets from being surrendered to shelters and rescues. These local businesses are committed to the health, safety, and well-being of the animals they provide for families.

For these reasons, HB 1816 is not only unnecessary—it is counterproductive. Pennsylvania already has a strong, enforceable regulatory framework that governs pet stores and breeders alike. Shutting down licensed, inspected pet stores will not stop bad breeders; it will weaken oversight, reduce transparency, and



harm both animals and consumers. We respectfully urge the Committee to vote NO on HB 1816 and instead work collaboratively to build on Pennsylvania's existing animal welfare protections.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alyssa Miller-Hurley
Vice President of Government Affairs

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TESTIMONY OF PENNSYLVANIA FARM BUREAU

House Bill 1816

Pennsylvania House Consumer Protection, Technology & Utilities Committee

February 24, 2026

Good morning. Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is pleased to offer remarks today on House Bill 1816, the “Pet-Shop Kennel Act.” Farm Bureau is the Commonwealth’s largest general farm organization, with approximately 26,000 member-families engaged in all manner of agricultural activities, including the production and processing of crops; the production and processing of forestry products; landscaping and horticultural services; agriculture-related support services; food manufacturing; and the production of animals, including breeding and raising dogs for commercial sale.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau strongly opposes House Bill 1816, as it targets and intentionally disfavors an important segment of the Commonwealth’s agricultural economy by coercing some businesses to subsidize direct competitors; limits the ability of an individual Pennsylvanian to purchase the pet of his choice; and infringes upon the inherent individual right to the use of one’s own property for one’s own benefit (and by extension, the benefit of his community) that is guaranteed to every American citizen by the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions.

House Bill 1816 prohibits the issuance or renewal of a “pet-shop kennel” (defined in the bill as a kennel or person that acquires and sells dogs, cats or rabbits for the purposes of resale, and sells or offers to sell such animals at retail) license for any person holding such a license in accordance with the Dog Law that was issued prior to Jan. 1, 2027. However, pet-shop kennels would “not be prohibited from offering space to humane societies or rescue organizations to showcase adoptable animals to the public.” In fact, the legislation goes a step further in its animus toward commercial dog breeders and raisers by disallowing a pet-shop kennel from recouping the costs associated with “offering” competing suppliers of dogs space in its facility.

Leaving aside obvious questions related to the propriety of 1) abrogating (without cause) a license issued in good faith by the Commonwealth to a business legally operating within its borders; 2) forcing that business to subsidize a competitor by requiring it to house and promote that competitor’s animals with no access to compensation for this service through adoption or other fees; and 3) the legislation’s prohibition of pet-shop kennels’ ability to offer additional dogs, breed additional dogs or otherwise increase the population of dogs in the kennel while being limited to “showcasing” rescue dogs, this provision contradicts Farm Bureau policy, which supports:

- Continued allowance of pet-shop kennels that are licensed and inspected by the state to purchase animals from multiple sources; and
- That all kennels licensed and inspected by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture must abide by the same regulatory standards, regardless of status (commercial, non-commercial, non-profit, or boarding).

House Bill 1816 also mandates that persons/pet-shop kennels allow warrantless inspections of their facilities by state dog wardens, police officers, and others authorized by law enforcement. This too contradicts Farm Bureau policy, in that we support legislation requiring state officials to identify themselves, notify property owners, obtain written or oral permission, or have a search warrant before going onto private property.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau members, including the dog raisers we represent, are committed to maintaining and improving the welfare of the animals we raise. Those individuals, like the operators of most private businesses providing products or services to the public in a competitive marketplace, want to provide their consumers with the highest quality puppies. Those currently licensed under the authority of the Pennsylvania Dog Law and the USDA have formed two organizations of over 500 puppy raisers in the state. They have also implemented a Kennel Assistance Program to self-monitor and communicate directly with regulators to make sure their puppies are being raised in the best possible conditions.

The larger issue is the number of kennels in the Commonwealth that continue to raise and sell puppies without being properly licensed. In fact, Victoria, the namesake of House Bill 1816, was acquired from a non-licensed kennel. We believe that the underground industry in the pet world should be held accountable, but in our view, penalizing licensed puppy raisers who are pushing the bar upward in making sure that their customers' puppies are being raised in the most humane way achievable does nothing to address that issue. In fact, House Bill 1816, if enacted, will result in a not-insignificant number of Pennsylvania residents seeking new pets spending their money outside the Commonwealth, thus reducing economic growth—and the resulting tax revenue—at a time when the state is facing a persistent multi-billion-dollar structural budget deficit.

In closing, permitting and licensing reform have been centerpiece issues in recent years for the Shapiro Administration and many members of the General Assembly, including, we suspect, some of the members of this committee. House Bill 1816, if approved, sends a contradictory (at best) signal to *all* businesses licensed to operate (or considering operating) in Pennsylvania about the future security and stability of their investment, which sadly, seems to be a primary objective (and, if enacted, will be a primary outcome) of this legislation.

Once again, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau strongly opposes House Bill 1816. We thank the committee for the opportunity to share our views.

HB 1816 Victoria's Law Testimony to Consumer Protection, Technology & Utilities Committee

By Suzanne S. Gonzalez, President – Pennsylvania Voters For Animals

Contact: sgonza12@comcast.net 267-994-7273

Introduction (Approx. 40 seconds)

"Good day, Chair [Name], and members of the Consumer Protection, Technology, and Utilities committee. My name is Suzanne Gonzalez, and I am a resident of Pennsylvania, the president of Pennsylvania Voters For Animals, a nonprofit organization, and also an ardent supporter of House Bill 1816, Victoria's Law. I am here today to advocate for the statewide prohibition on the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits in retail pet stores because it is the most effective way to protect consumers, combat inhumane companion animal breeding practices, and strengthen PA's animal protection laws."

Breeding Mill to Pet Store Pipeline (Approx. 1 minute)

"Animals sold in pet stores rarely come from local, private breeders. Instead, most animals, including dogs, cats, and rabbits, are sourced from commercial 'puppy mills' and other large-scale commercial breeding facilities. These breeding mills prioritize profit over the health and well-being of the animals, leading to inhumane, even horrific, conditions. The dogs, cats, and rabbits used as breeder animals are often confined to cramped, unsanitary cages with little to no veterinary care or opportunities for socialization. Many suffer from severe health issues and genetic diseases or defects from irresponsible breeding practices. This bill is not just about prohibiting pet sales; it's about dismantling an industry that perpetuates cruelty and suffering at its very source."

Consumer Protection (Approx. 1.5 minutes)

"Beyond the immense animal suffering, this bill is crucial for consumer protection. Many consumers are unaware of the true source of these animals. They believe they are supporting a local business, only to find out their new puppy, kitten, or bunny came from a breeding mill and may already be sick or have an underlying genetic condition. We have heard heartbreaking stories of pets dying shortly after purchase, leaving families devastated and facing large veterinary bills."

In Pennsylvania, predatory lending is prohibited by various consumer protection laws, but regrettably, it still persists due to creative tactics used by predatory lenders to skirt PA's regulations. Pet stores frequently partner with third-party financing companies to offer payment plans. Consumers are often misled or pressured during emotional, impulse-driven companion animal purchases. They are told that they can finance a puppy for low monthly payments, but the fine print often reveals that the loan interest rates are often at 130% to 188%¹, making the total cost several times the original price of the animal. In fact, I have personally visited several retail pet stores in PA that sell puppies and was offered financing through Easypay Finance which offers loans through Transportation Alliance Bank. On their brochure it states "90% chance you'll be approved after pre-qualification."

Humane and Ethical Business Model (Approx. 1 minute)

"The argument that pet stores cannot succeed without selling live animals is simply false. Many successful retail pet stores have already adapted to a business model that does not rely on animal sales. These retailers thrive by focusing on pet supplies, food, services, and, most importantly, partnering with local shelters and rescue organizations. By using their retail settings to promote adoption-ready dogs, cats, and rabbits, they can continue to be a valuable part of the community while nurturing a more humane and ethical approach to companion animal procurement."

Conclusion and Call to Action (Approx. 40 seconds)

"Prohibiting the sale of mill-bred dogs, cats, and rabbits in retail pet stores is a vital step forward for Pennsylvania. House Bill 1816, Victoria's Law, will protect countless animals from a life of misery and ensures that consumers are not unwittingly supporting or being taken advantage of by this cruel industry. I urge you to pass this bill and send a clear message that Pennsylvania is committed to the protection of its citizens and to the welfare of its companion animals. Thank you for your time and consideration."

Citation:

¹https://www.nclc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/IB_Easypay_Puppy_Loans_Feb22.pdf

Pennsylvania Professional Dog Breeders Association

East Earl, PA

Feb. 2, 2026

To: Members of the PA House of Representatives, Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities Committee

From: Jay Howes, Government Relations Advisor
PA Professional Dog Breeders Association

Re: HB1816

I am offering these comments today on behalf of the PA Purebred Dog Breeders Association (PPDBA) whose membership is comprised nearly entirely of owners of fully licensed and inspected Commercial Kennels. In fact, nearly all of owners of licensed commercial kennels are members of PPDBA.

Members of PPBDA are dedicated to not only providing healthy puppies to PA families but doing so from kennels that are in full compliance with all regulations in effect under the authority of the PA Dog Law -- which are among the most stringent in the country. They also fully supported the updates to the Dog Law contained in Act 47 of 2024 which, among other things, increased fines, improved consumer transparency, public safety and animal welfare. This bill included provisions to require pet shops and kennels offering dogs for sale/adoption to display specific information including the dog's identity, breeder location and state/federal license number and documentation of inoculation, vaccination, and medical treatments. All information essential to a buyer making an informed decision when buying a pet

None of these consumer safeguards would exist if pet stores were prohibited from selling dogs. Rather, consumers would be forced to buy puppies from unknown sources, including uninspected out of state rescues, the internet, dog auctions or international dog brokers – all unregulated sources.

PPDBA believes the main problem related to puppy sales is not with pet store sales, but with sales from unlicensed kennels conducting business outside of any regulatory oversight. House Bill 1816 does nothing to address this problem. It does not impose any new or enhanced penalties targeting unlicensed kennels and it does nothing to deter or shut down illegal breeding operations that operate outside the law.

Because these kennels are not regulated or inspected, eliminating licensed pet shops will not affect their unsavory business model.

In addition to our concerns about the misguided policy contained in HB1816, we must also note that the bill, as written, has serious issues regarding statutory construction, definitions and provisions that conflict with existing law. This would lead nowhere but to confusion and uneven enforcement in the puppy marketplace. In addition, HB 1816 creates a new statutory framework with definitions that differ from existing Pennsylvania animal and dog laws, increasing the likelihood of confusion, inconsistent enforcement, and unintended legal conflicts.

In summary, the PPDBA opposes enactment of HB1816 on the basis of it being misguided public policy that attempts to solve a problem that does not exist in the dog marketplace.

Thank you for consideration of these comments as you further consider HB1816.



Dr Marc Abraham OBE, BVM&S MRCVS,
All-Party Parliamentary Dog Advisory Welfare Group (APDAWG),
House of Commons,
London SW1A 0AA,
United Kingdom.

Dear Chair Burgos and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr Marc Abraham OBE, and I'm a practicing veterinarian, secretariat of the All-Party Parliamentary Dog Advisory Welfare Group (APDAWG) in Westminster, England, plus founder of the successful Lucy's Law campaign which banned commercial third party sales of puppies and kittens, e.g. from British pet stores, since 2020. I am writing to express my extremely strong support for H.B. 1816, also known as "Victoria's Law", which would finally prohibit the retail sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits in Pennsylvania pet stores.

This very important proposed legislation is one of the most critical steps toward ending the ongoing cycle of animal cruelty, abuse, and exploitation perpetuated by commercial pet breeding facilities, often known as "puppy mills," "kitten mills," and "rabbit mills." These disgusting but licensed operations continue to prioritize profit over animal welfare, leading to overcrowded, unsanitary conditions, lack of veterinary care and supervision, directly resulting in severe emotional and physical suffering for both the breeding animals, their vulnerable offspring, plus any prospective new pet owners.

As a veterinarian and passionate animal welfare campaigner based in England, who has traveled the world to support animal welfare causes, issues, and organisations, I have witnessed firsthand how dogs, cats, and rabbits are widely mistreated on the "production end" of pet store animals in the United States, specifically in Pennsylvania.

Banning the retail sale of these animals not only helps to protect consumers from the lack of transparency associated with pet store sales, and values animals' lives as more than simple commodities to be purchased off the shelf, but instead encourages purchases only direct from ethical, responsible breeders or adoption from shelters and rescues, where countless healthy, loving pets are waiting for their loving forever homes.

This vital and urgently-needed shift not only reduces demand for inhumanly bred animals, especially via impulse purchasing, plus highlights the distinct and worrying lack of breeder accountability in the pet store pet-selling process, but also helps prospective owners, e.g. young families, find healthy, confident, well-adjusted and responsibly-bred pets, as well as alleviate the overcrowding crisis in shelters; ultimately sparing consumers

from the trauma of sick and dying pets, as well as unnecessary medical costs, while also helping save countless animals' lives.

For some years now, many progressive communities right across the United States and United Kingdom have already enjoyed successfully enacting similar commercial dog, cat, and rabbit pet store bans that have, of course, seen hugely positive outcomes, including increased shelter adoption rates and a welcome decline in consumer complaints about sick animals purchased from pet stores. H.B. 1816 is an evidence based, compassionate, common-sense measure that clearly aligns with modern, forward-thinking shared values of kindness, responsibility, and respect for all living beings.

It's also worth noting that The American Kennel Club (AKC) advises prospective puppy buyers to purchase from responsible breeders who "allow you to see the environment where the mother and puppies are kept", "avoid those selling in public places", and to "meet [the breeder] in person", as well as to always "see the pup's parents"; so H.B. 1816 would of course mean that all these essential protections were finally mandatory by law.

Finally, I proudly and successfully led the campaign for Lucy's Law's ban on third party puppy and kitten sellers e.g. pet stores in England, very similar legislation to H.B. 1816. I fought to end these third party sales because of lack of breeder accountability, especially regarding pet illnesses coming into my clinic originating from unscrupulous breeders hundreds of miles away, such as highly contagious parvovirus; often deadly for young, innocent animals, and devastating both financially and emotionally for confused and overwhelmed owners.

The triumph of the highly popular and bipartisan-supported Lucy's Law in the UK Parliament, for consumers and animals, helped pave the way for the passage of the same legislation in Wales and Scotland as well, with Northern Ireland close to doing the same. The implementation of H.B. 1816 would also bring with it huge and exciting opportunities for owner education around purchasing and adopting a pet.

In conclusion Chair Burgos and Members of the Committee, I therefore urge you all to vote **YES** on H.B. 1816 to help protect animals and humans from needless suffering while promoting ethical, responsible, humane pet ownership. With every clear and obvious reason to support Victoria's Law, and as a veterinarian and campaigner who's seen the success of a puppy and kitten retail ban in the UK, I don't understand why any individual, group, or organisation on the right side of history would even consider opposing H.B. 1816; such a simple, kind, and necessary measure, guaranteed to improve millions of animals' and humans' lives right across the whole of Pennsylvania, and beyond.

Thank you all for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr Marc Abraham OBE, BVM&S MRCVS [Contact: marcthefunkyvet@hotmail.com]



**AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®**

February 17, 2026

RE: TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 1816

Chair Burgos and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding House Bill 1816.

The American Kennel Club (AKC) writes on behalf of our 246 Pennsylvania dog clubs and thousands of constituent dog owners in the Commonwealth to share our concern with and opposition to HB 1816 which would establish a retail pet store ban.

The AKC is the world's largest purebred dog registry, our affiliated clubs operate America's largest purebred rescue network, and for 140 years we have been proud to be the only non-profit purebred registry devoted to the health, well-being, and humane treatment of all dogs. We advocate for responsible dog ownership and support strong and properly enforced laws that protect dogs.

The American Kennel Club respectfully opposes House Bill 1816.

AKC strongly supports responsible dog ownership, meaningful consumer protection, and robust enforcement of Pennsylvania's Dog Law. However, HB 1816 disrupts the balanced statutory framework recently enacted by the General Assembly with Act 18 of 2023 and risks reopening policy debates that were resolved through a careful and collaborative stakeholder process.

With passage of Act 18 of 2023, the General Assembly adopted comprehensive updates to Pennsylvania's Dog Law following extensive discussions among legislators, regulated entities, shelters, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders.

Those reforms strengthened sourcing requirements, enhanced transparency, and implemented meaningful consumer protection measures for pet shop kennels. Importantly, this process resulted in a broad understanding that the enhanced regulatory structure would address concerns about substandard breeding and sourcing practices and would, for the foreseeable future, conclude efforts to impose a retail pet sales ban in Pennsylvania.

HB 1816 risks upsetting that carefully negotiated compromise. Public policy stability is important. When stakeholders negotiate in good faith and the legislature enacts a balanced framework, regulated parties should be able to rely on that agreement.

If passed, HB 1816 permits pet shop kennels to partner with shelters or rescue organizations to display dogs for adoption. While this may appear reasonable on its face, the bill creates inconsistent regulatory and disclosure standards within the same physical retail environment.

Consumers entering a pet shop should receive uniform information and consumer protection regardless of whether a dog is offered for sale or adoption. Transparency should not vary depending on the source designation of the dog. Uniform standards promote clarity, consumer

confidence, and accountability.

AKC respectfully urges the Committee to oppose HB 1816. However, if the Committee determines to move the bill forward, it is essential that uniform transparency standards apply to all dogs displayed in a pet shop kennel. Therefore, we respectfully request that the following language be added on page 6, line 22, following the word "public":

Any dog displayed in a pet shop kennel pursuant to a partnership agreement with a shelter or rescue organization shall be subject to the same enclosure posting, recordkeeping, and consumer disclosure requirements applicable to dogs offered for sale in a pet shop kennel under this act and shall include the complete rescue and/or sheltering history of the dog.

This amendment ensures equal treatment of all dogs displayed in a retail kennel setting, consistent enclosure posting and recordkeeping obligations, meaningful consumer disclosure, and transparency regarding rescue or sheltering history.

While current law requires that someone buying a dog from a pet store should have complete information on the origin of the dog, someone "adopting" a dog from a shelter or rescue displayed in a pet store should also be provided with as much information as is known about the dog. The "adopter" should at least know if the dog was picked up roaming the neighborhood streets, rescued or brought to a shelter because of some owner issue or incident, or if it came from some other shelter/rescue either in the Commonwealth or out of state.

If the sponsor and supporters of this legislation really care about consumer protection and dogs, opposition to such disclosure limits both transparency to the consumer and protection for the dog.

The American Kennel Club respectfully opposes House Bill 1816 because it risks undermining the recently negotiated Dog Law framework and reintroduces instability into an area where stakeholders reached meaningful compromise.

Should the Committee elect to advance the legislation, we strongly urge adoption of the proposed amendment to ensure uniform disclosure standards and consumer protection for all dogs displayed in pet shop kennels.

Sincerely,



Charley Hall
Mid-Atlantic Region Manager
American Kennel Club, Government Relations

RETAIL BANS UNDERMINE CONSUMER CHOICE

The AKC advocates for responsible dog owners and supports strong enforcement of local and state animal cruelty laws as well as the federal Animal Welfare Act, which provides consistent minimum standards of care, regulatory oversight and inspections of pet breeders, dealers, and other important players in the pet industry. The majority of breeders who register their dogs with AKC do not sell pets through pet stores; however, AKC's strong commitment to responsible dog ownership and the well-being of all dogs, and our expertise with both rescue and purpose-bred dogs compels us to weigh in on this important issue.

The AKC shares the concerns about the well-being of all pets. We are the world's largest purebred dog registry, our affiliated clubs operate America's largest purebred rescue network, and for over 130 years we have been proud to be the only non-profit purebred registry devoted to the health and well-being of all dogs. However, retail pet store restrictions will not accomplish these goals and lead to many consequences that harm dogs and future dog owners:

RESTRICTIONS ON CONSUMER PROTECTION

These bills remove existing consumer protections currently available to breeder and pet store customers. Shelters and rescues are not required to meet the same standards and cannot provide the same guarantees and recourses. Rather than getting a dog of a specific breed from a professional breeder subject to federal and state animal welfare laws, customers are getting a dog with unknown background, temperament and health history. Also, there are rescues and transports that unfortunately do not care as diligently for the animals. This is a significant concern that can impact both the public health and the health of animals.



RESTRICTIONS ON CONSUMER CHOICE

These bills limit the ability of residents to select pets in a responsible manner, based on the breed, health and temperament traits that they seek and make a good match for their lifestyle. Local residents may be wanting a quality purpose-bred pet and may not have access to a local breeder, do not want to be put on a long waiting list, etc. Instead, they may wish to purchase a dog from a regulated, licensed pet store where they can still get the consumer protections, the health history, and ongoing professional relationships they desire.



NO IMPACT ON CRUELTY OR NEGLIGENCE ISSUES

These proposals assume that all dogs sold at pet stores have been raised in poor conditions, which is simply not accurate. Instead, they remove one of the most regulated and vetted sources of pets from the market to favor unregulated pet distributors and randomly-sourced pets that lack oversight, and actually exacerbate issues associated with irresponsible actors in the retail and retail rescue pet industry. In addition, it is important to note that while these proposals are touted as a way to put an end to "puppy mills", fewer than 4 percent of pets purchased in the US come from pet shops.



Retail pet store bans and restrictions limit consumer choice and protection, while doing nothing to actually help dogs. The better solution is to consider broad consumer protection and cruelty laws that hold all accountable who sell or transport dogs, while allowing owners to choose the best pet for their family and lifestyle.

www.akc.org

To learn more, visit www.akcgr.org/akc/petchoice

American Kennel Club Government Relations
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