



In just the past 20 years we have seen dramatic improvement in reducing the risk factor of homelessness for dogs in the United States. We see a much-improved situation for dogs in this country thanks to an intensive collaboration between animal welfare organizations, rescue groups, veterinarians and pet retailers.

## THE UNREGULATED MARKET

The new reality is that there are not enough homeless dogs of any size or age to meet annual demand. The shortages and shelters being emptied have been widely documented during the COVID pandemic. To meet this demand, the number of unregulated sources of dogs has exploded over the past five years. As evidenced by many years of surveying, pet stores are a very insignificant source of dogs and is not in any position to meet the demand. However, while regulated pet stores have been closed by activist legislative efforts, the unregulated world of dog selling (adoption fees over \$1,000) has far surpassed anyone's expectations. To meet the increasing demand for dogs in America, many unregulated rescue groups are now obtaining dogs that were purchased through dog auctions, bought directly from USDA licensed breeders, backyard breeders and even imported dogs from foreign countries. These unregulated sources of dogs have become the "wild wild west" of dog selling.

## HAVE EXISTING PET SALE BANS IMPROVED ANIMAL WELFARE?

While euthanasia rates have dropped and shelter populations continue to decrease, the number of retail pet bans has been on the rise. Across America today, approximately 300 communities and 3-states have banned the sales of regulated pets at pet stores. Activists testify bans are needed to improve animal welfare. They claim banning retail sales of regulated pets will **reduce** demand for these pets which will trickle down and eliminate substandard breeders known as "mills". This proposition has been proven false.

While activists publicly claim to support animal welfare, there's no evidence pet sale bans have eliminated a single "puppy mill" or improved animal welfare. The exact opposite is true. Bans are pushing families to buy their pets over the internet or in the dark corners of the unregulated pet trade. A space without any oversight. A space that lacks transparency, animal welfare standards, consumer protection and consumer choice. This does not promote animal welfare.

So, if banning the sale of pets for the purpose of improving animal welfare isn't producing the desired results, why are activists continuing to push regulated pet sale bans? Further, why would a local or state governmental body support a bill that eliminates regulatory oversight and animal welfare safeguards?

Of the estimated 100,000+ breeders in American, only 2% are regulated and inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture and those are the puppies allowed to be sold at pet stores. Petland offers health warranties for our puppies and all our pet sales are subject to state consumer protection laws. The remaining 98,000+ breeders are unregulated, with many



selling their puppies on the internet, flea markets, and out of the back of trucks along the side of the road.

Pet ownership is very emotional and often polarizing. But the conversation must start with answering the question “**Does eliminating the only regulated source of pets improve animal welfare?**”. Clearly it doesn’t. It does the exact opposite. Just like with Prohibition from the 1920s, the unregulated pet trade will find a way to meet American’s strong demand for pets. This new underground pet industry has unintended consequences of increased cases of rabies, parasites and aggressive dog attacks on children and the elderly.

This shift from regulated to unregulated sourcing of dogs creates many uncertainties including issues such as consumer fraud without any consumer protection (Pennsylvania has consumer protections in place for pet store customers), and public health concerns with unregulated trafficking of dogs bringing zoonotic diseases, such as rabies, into communities within the US.

## REGULATIONS PROVIDE THE BEST PROTECTIONS

Regulated sources of pets ensure stronger animal welfare standards, greater transparency for regulators and consumers and it ensures state consumer protection for pet owners. While the loud crowd of special interest activists demand bans, their proposal fails to improve animal welfare. Pets are part of our families. They deserve the protection of regulatory oversight, greater transparency and humane standards of care. There are many examples of states, like Pennsylvania, and local municipalities creating thoughtful, responsible regulations to ensure that pet stores are buying from responsible, professional, regulated breeders.

While this is a rather broad overview of some of the animal welfare issues Petland is involved with on a daily basis, we are happy to provide any follow up information, answer any questions or work with any entity to help craft meaningful regulation that truly protects pets and consumers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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Petland, Inc.

