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October 18, 2020

Judiciary Committee  
Pennsylvania State Senate  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

**RE: VETERINARY SUPPORT for SB 44: Providing for Transfer and Sale of Animals**

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association and our 600+ Pennsylvania veterinary professional members, we are writing in support of SB 44, legislation that prohibits Pennsylvania pet stores from selling dogs and cats. In lieu of these sales, this legislation would promote partnerships between Pennsylvania pet stores and nonprofit rescue groups and municipal shelters for the adoption of cats and dogs from pet shop locations.

The framework in which pet sales occur is changing dramatically. A significant majority of pet stores no longer sell live animals obtained from commercial breeding operations. Instead, many operate successfully using a viable business model in which they partner with rescue organizations to offer animals for adoption in their stores and achieve mutually beneficial results.

By severing connections with inherently inhumane commercial breeding enterprises known as 'mills,' pet stores are no longer supporting businesses which often house animals in substandard conditions, provide inadequate veterinary medical care and little to no socialization. As veterinary professionals, we have seen many of these animals in our practices after they have been purchased by Pennsylvania families and end up with severe health and behavior problems, causing unanticipated expenses and severe heartbreak for all involved.

Conversely, by partnering with rescue groups and shelters to offer animals for adoption, pet shops are helping to reduce the societal burdens of housing and/or euthanizing so many animals and also creating goodwill among the adopters, many of whom will become loyal customers for their pet supply needs. Furthermore, those families who still wish to purchase an animal from a breeder can work with responsible breeders who typically require that potential customers personally visit the animals at their breeding facilities rather than selling their animals at a pet shop location.

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Nearly 300 localities in the U.S., as well as the states of California and Maryland have passed laws similar to SB 44, banning retail sales of dogs and cats at pet shops. Given Pennsylvania's history of promoting the humane treatment of animals, we look forward to the passage of SB 44 which will benefit both Pennsylvania families and their animal companions.

Thank you for your humane leadership on this important animal welfare legislation.

Signed by the following Pennsylvania Veterinary Professionals:

Dr. John Rossi, VMD, M. Bioethics  
HSVMA Pennsylvania State Representative

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