

October 16, 2020

Dear Judiciary Committee, Chair Lisa Baker, Chair Larry Farnese, and Committee Members:

Thank you for holding a hearing to discuss Pennsylvania Dog Laws and Related Animal Welfare issues including SB 44, Victoria's Law.

As a Veterinarian in Pennsylvania, an Erie resident, and a representative of Erie Puppy Mill Awareness, I get to see the repercussions from the commercial breeding industry directly. It troubles me that in 2020, we live in a society that allows the mass production of living, companion animals in a mill. These mills are poorly regulated by our own government, without regard for the health or wellbeing of the animals. There is no preservation of the breed attempted in a mill. It is a supply-and-demand-driven market that does not support humane practice for animals. If there is any action for government to take, it should be to protect the animals who have no voice.

Besides, being mass produced, they are raised in deplorable conditions and lack appropriate preventive veterinary care and socialization. More often than not they come to me genetically flawed, ridden with intestinal parasites, fighting respiratory illness from mass shipments to pet stores, and behaviorally challenging from a lack of handling or exposure to life outside of a cage. How does living in tiny enclosures without socialization or positive experiences start a good Human-Animal bond? It's the predominant reason we have made them a domesticated species.

I'd also like to share the emotional and financial tolls that a puppy mill dog can place on a family, the consumer. The consumers in my area are told they are buying from high quality reputable breeders. The unknowing consumer spends hundreds to thousands of dollars for a puppy bred in a mill. EPMA has collected hundreds of pages of proof of where local pet store Heartland Pets purchases their puppies. Some of which have come from known HSUS Horrible 100 Puppy Mills. Unfortunately, consumers are not always prepared for unexpected medical bills or the extensive training puppy mill dogs need after purchase. These puppies come to me for euthanasia consults or are owner surrendered to local shelters. I urge you to also protect the consumer and pass Victoria's Law.

SB-44, or Victoria's Law, is one step forward in helping the doggie in the window. It is legislation that could protect pets and consumers by driving the Pennsylvania market toward more humane sources.

I appreciate Pennsylvania Senator Dan Laughlin (district 49, serving Erie County) for co-sponsoring SB 44 (Victoria's Law). I ask that you please vote this bill out of committee.

Thanks for your consideration.

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