



October 17, 2020

Dear Senator Baker, Senator Farnese, and Judiciary Committee Members,

United Against Puppy Mills is a volunteer-based non-profit organization located in Lancaster, Pennsylvania dedicated to educating the public on the cruelty and inhumane practices of the puppy mill industry. We have corresponded with many consumers who have contacted us with questions or concerns about where to purchase a puppy. We are requesting your support on SB 44 and to move this bill to the floor for a full Senate vote.

Reputable breeders will not sell their puppies to a pet store. This law will not affect consumer choice because someone can still purchase a puppy based on breed, temperament, and activity level, directly from a breeder or can also choose to adopt from a breed specific rescue. Many of the puppies sold in pet stores now are not even American Kennel Club (AKC) registered breeds, but mixed breed dogs with designer titles. The AKC does not recognize these “designer breeds” on their registry.

Commercially bred puppies often become sick due to the poor breeding, unsanitary conditions of these kennels, and long-distance transport to pet stores. Families are devastated after their new puppy dies of illness or congenital issues, and may have spent hundreds if not thousands of dollars at their veterinarian. According to the CDC, ill puppies sold at pet stores have passed dangerous diseases onto consumers and employees, such as campylobacter, a bacterial infection. While the state has made progress in this domain of animal welfare, state and federal laws are still deficient. Loopholes allow violators to continue renewing their licenses, and fail to adequately address the fraud and deception of puppy mills.

Many pet stores, internet websites, and newspapers have advertised and sold puppies from breeders with violations under state or federal law. A requirement of this bill to have licenses included in all advertising protects consumers from inadvertently supporting a breeder who has violations.

To protect Pennsylvanians not only from the potential of purchasing a sick puppy, we also want to protect our citizens from zoonotic diseases. We know that there have been cases of Campylobacter infections in PA linked to pet store puppies. With the current issue of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that we take all necessary precautions to protect our citizens.

Thank you for holding a hearing on SB44-Victoria’s Law. Based on the large amount of Senate co-sponsors, it is evident that this law is supported by the majority of Pennsylvanians and necessary to keep our citizens and canine companions safe and healthy.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this.

Best regards,

Michele Patterson

Board Member, United Against Puppy Mills