

SB 625_Humane Society US_FAV

Uploaded by: Hovermale, Emily

Position: FAV



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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February 27, 2020

Finance Committee
Maryland Senate
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for SB 625 - Business Regulation – Retail Pet Stores – Internet Sales of Domestic Animals
(No More Puppy– and Kitten–Mills Act of 2020)

Dear Chairman Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and members of the Committee,

The Humane Society of the United States, representing our members and supporters in Maryland, supports SB 625, legislation aimed at expanding on the current prohibition to sell dogs and cats in retail pet stores to include internet transactions.

We all know the internet can be a great place to buy anything from books to DVDs and rare gifts, but it's not where you should go to buy a new pet.

Tens of thousands of dogs are shipped into the U.S. from puppy mills in foreign countries, purchased by people over internet sites. Many people who have purchased puppies and kittens online find that their new pets are sick and often die from their health problems. Some never even knew they were dealing with someone outside of the U.S. or that their puppy was born overseas before being sold to a U.S. broker.

In the real world of online pet sales, families often lose significant money when the pet they ordered falls ill soon after arrival, but the real victims are the breeding animals stuck in factory-style operations, churning out puppies to be sold off for a quick profit. The Humane Society of the United States' Animal Rescue Team has assisted local law enforcement in the removal of thousands of dogs from deplorable conditions in puppy mills, many of which were selling over the internet to hide the conditions in which the animals were living. In a 2008 case in West Virginia, HSUS Emergency Services team assisted in removing more than 900 animals from overcrowded and substandard conditions at Whispering Oaks Kennel, an online puppy retailer. The Environmental Protection Agency had determined that wastes from the facility were polluting local waterways in addition.

In addition to disreputable dealers and puppy mills, internet scammers have crept into the realm of online pet sales, stealing money from unsuspecting people who think their new dog or cat is on the way to his or her new home, when in fact there was never really an animal at all. The only party harmed in these scams is the person who is out hundreds or thousands of dollars. According to the [Better Business Bureau Scam Tracker Risk Report](#), pets were the #1 subject of online purchase scams, making up more than one quarter of all "products" reported. Incredibly, experts believe at least 80% of sponsored advertisements about pets may be fake.

SB 625 is an important animal welfare and consumer protection bill, and for that reason I respectfully urge a favorable committee report.

Sincerely,

Emily Hovermale
Maryland and Delaware State Director

SB 625_MD Votes for Animals_FAV

Uploaded by: Radov, Lisa

Position: FAV



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

February 27, 2020

To: Senate Finance Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Business Regulation - Retail Pet Stores – Internet Sales of Domestic Animals (No More Puppy- and Kitten - Mills Act of 2020) – SB 625 – SUPPORT

Chairman Kelley, Vice Chairman Feldman, members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. On behalf of our board of directors and our thousands of members across the State of Maryland, I urge you to support Business Regulation - Retail Pet Stores – Internet Sales of Domestic Animals (No More Puppy- and Kitten - Mills Act of 2020) – SB 625.

Maryland took a big step out of the puppy mills industry in 2018. My thanks to those of you who were on this committee and helped pass that humane legislation. Unfortunately, the puppy mills pipeline is alive and well – and still operating in our State via the Internet. It is time to cut off the flow of these puppies and kittens from out-of-state puppy mills and ensure that Marylanders are not supporting a cruel industry that treats puppies and kittens like inventory ----- and not our best friends.

Maryland breeders would not be affected, and in fact may be helped, by keeping all sales of cats and dogs in our State. Marylanders who want a Labradoodle from a Maryland breeder would still be able to get that Labradoodle. The difference is that they would be able to meet that breeder and see for themselves that the cat or dog that they are bringing home to their family is living in healthy and humane conditions. The goal of this legislation is to close a loophole in the 2018 law.

Allowing Marylanders to purchase puppies and kittens via the Internet is a step backwards.

Let's continue make Maryland a state with NO profit from Puppy Mills!

I would like to thank Senator Kramer for his sponsorship of SB 625 and urge a favorable report.

Let Kindness Reign, Vote Humane

WWW.VOTEANIMALS.ORG

PuppySpot_FWA_SB625

Uploaded by: Lininger, Brett

Position: FWA



Senate Finance Committee
SB 625
Position: Favorable with Amendment

Dear Chairwoman Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Josh Kreinberg. I am the Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel of PuppySpot. We are a USDA licensed and inspected service connecting people who wish to adopt a puppy.

Senate Bill 625 would expand the definition of “retail pet store” to include any for-profit establishment that, by Internet transaction, sells domestic animals to be kept as household pets, thereby prohibiting the sale or offering for sale cats and dogs by such establishments. While we support the legislation’s intent of improving the welfare of the animals in our care, the legislation, in its current form fails to distinguish between those breeders that adhere to the highest standards of health and welfare from those that engage in substandard practices.

More than just a service, PuppySpot is a community of dog lovers whose mission is to make lives better by responsibly placing healthy puppies into happy, caring homes. The PuppySpot brand, with puppies at the center, is rooted in the belief that dogs should be celebrated and that owners deserve to experience trust, confidence and transparency when searching for their new companions. Because we respect dogs as much as we celebrate them, PuppySpot strives to continually improve our standards to ensure that animal welfare is always at the center of our system. We are committed to providing thoughtful consideration to the wellbeing and ethical treatment of the dogs at all times and at all stages of our process.

Our PuppySpot Gives Back Program continues our mission to celebrate dogs always and make a difference by integrating philanthropy into our corporate philosophy and actions. With a multi-prong approach, the program incorporates puppy placements through non-profit organizations for individuals and families who can positively be impacted by a new addition, employee volunteer days, and corporate donations. We are proud of our associations with numerous charities including the Make a Wish Foundation and the Wounded Warriors Project.

PuppySpot Helps Grant 1900th Wish in NY



PuppySpot Gives Back To Another Warrior



PuppySpot is not a breeder. Instead, we work directly with a network of breeders around the country. Each of these breeder partners is thoroughly screened prior to receiving authorization to join the PuppySpot network.



We use a personalized approach that caters to the needs of the families and individuals in search of a new furry friend as well as the concerns of the responsible breeders who are looking for their puppies' forever homes. PuppySpot makes fetching your new best friend a simple and enjoyable experience.

PuppySpot is proud of our fully screened and vetted network of responsible breeders. Each breeder within the PuppySpot community is held to the highest standards, with the health, welfare and safety for all dogs (not just the puppies) as top priorities. Utilizing a comprehensive, proprietary screening process that is continually updated, PuppySpot invites less than 10 percent of breeders who begin the PuppySpot review process to join our exclusive community — ensuring that both our two- and four-legged friends receive a premium experience that is seamless and quality-driven.

**The PuppySpot Difference:
We Work with Only the Highest Quality, Most Responsible Breeders in
the Country**

Less than 10 percent of the breeder partners who enter the company's review process are accepted into the network.

- PuppySpot spends millions of dollars on a rigorous, proprietary screening and compliance program regarding our breeder network.
- PuppySpot terminates breeders who violate or do not comply with our standards.
- PuppySpot's enhanced screening has more than 100 points of emphasis for every puppy and its parents, and we have more than 50 employees dedicated to breeder compliance.

Following the initial screening process, PuppySpot continues to monitor our breeders through rescreenings, our field representative program and ongoing puppy health tracking.

A few examples of our breeder screening standards include a background check of each breeder's history, including a review of available public records (such as inspection reports from the USDA), operational history records, and any contact the breeder has had with local, state and federal animal control agencies; a review of breeder facilities and practices to ensure that each breeder provides the best care for the adult dogs and puppies, including a comprehensive, standardized interview conducted either by phone or in person and an evaluation to determine if the breeder is in compliance with PuppySpot's Standards; a comprehensive set of photos and/or video documenting all physical aspects of a breeder's operation including but not limited to housing facilities, storage facilities, cleaning methods and exercise/socialization facilities must be sent to PuppySpot.

Continuing our commitment to healthy, happy puppies, we are working with American Humane, the country's first national humane organization. For over a decade PuppySpot has placed puppies with thousands of families from screened and vetted breeders with a focus on expanded health and welfare standards. In its early stages, American Humane's animal welfare experts, researchers, and veterinarians will be thoroughly examining PuppySpot's breeders, practices and policies.

AMERICAN HUMANE
FIRST TO SERVE®

For more than a hundred years, American Humane has been first in promoting the welfare of animals and strengthening the bonds between people and animals.



PuppySpot is dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of all dogs, and as part of that commitment, we are proudly authorized by the American Kennel Club (AKC) to provide each of our puppy parents with a special AKC registration package from PuppySpot. The AKC is the largest purebred dog registry in the world and most widely recognized and respected in the US. Through its programs, events, and services they support and enrich the lives of all dogs and their families.

PuppySpot also provides continuing education for both breeders and new puppy owners, ensuring that all of the dogs we place are happy and healthy throughout their lives. We even offer a health guarantee for every puppy on the site.

Breeder Criteria



PuppySpot's breeders go through an application that requires paperwork, interviews, provision of living environment photos or videos and independent verification of data to ensure a breeder's high level of experience through pre-screening and ongoing review of ownership, operational history, field visits, criminal background checks, facility review, compliance evaluation, government and humanitarian data base review and veterinarian information.

A few examples of breeder criteria standards include, but are not limited to, a minimum 1.5 years of experience in canine breeding and a minimum of two litters before being permitted to join our network; an ongoing, formal relationship with an attending veterinarian and adhere to current written Program of Veterinary Care (a so-called, "PVC" which includes a veterinarian approved breeding plan, routine and preventative care, an examination schedule, parasite detection and elimination, exercise and socialization program, vaccination program, and any other elements recommended by the attending veterinarian); must send copies of all State and Federal inspection reports to PuppySpot; and must send updated facility photographs to PuppySpot at least once a year, and send updated photos to PuppySpot whenever modifications are made.

The breeders we work with must be in compliance with USDA and applicable state standards as a starting point, but we do not stop there. PuppySpot has developed a comprehensive set of animal welfare standards that exceed those of the government.

Adherence to Regulations

To ensure that a breeder is knowledgeable of and in compliance with all licensing requirements at every level and uses the USDA Animal Care Blue Book and USDA licensing requirements as key reference points for establishing best practices, the PuppySpot Scientific Advisory Board set standards that are above and beyond anything set by the government.

The PuppySpot Scientific Advisory Board's mandate is to continuously enhance PuppySpot's industry-leading standards with substantive, in-depth, science-based standards of practice for the company and its tens of thousands of breeder partners. The Board members' expertise spans fields relevant to ensuring the physical, emotional and long-term health of breeding dogs and puppies placed through PuppySpot's exclusive network of responsible breeders.

The Board is committed to constantly improving, refining and clarifying our standards to ensure they guarantee animal welfare. Using their wide range of professional expertise, the Board members scrutinize PuppySpot's requirements to ensure the physical and psychological health of all dogs in our exclusive network. Through PuppySpot's ongoing commitment to the wellbeing of dogs, utilizing the Board, we are raising the bar for canine welfare together.



A few examples of our standards related to the adherence of regulations include: a breeder must be knowledgeable of and in compliance with all federal, state and local licensing requirements. A copy of regulations is available on the USDA website; a breeder that is a licensed veterinarian cannot certify his or her own facilities or the health of the breeder's own dogs; PuppySpot may suspend its association with any breeder at any time and will automatically



do so in the case of any breeder found with either one critical, or three noncritical violations of animal welfare regulations in any 24-month period.

We have also recently penned a first of its kind agreement with American Humane, the nation's pre-eminent animal welfare organization. American Humane has subsequently established a set of comprehensive standards and audit tool. They are now in the process of auditing the breeders in our network.



PuppySpot also screens our customers to ensure every puppy goes to a happy, healthy home that is the best fit for the puppy and the individual/family. To guide customers to the perfect companion, we discuss the customers' lifestyles, their previous experience with dogs, their home environments, any allergies and other relevant information. From our first contact when we establish a customer's intentions for fetching their new best friend to our follow-ups in which we welcome the customer to our dog-loving community, PuppySpot is with the family each step of the way.

Our point is that we share your passion about the health and welfare of the animals in our care. We hope that the Committee does not advance arbitrary legislation that would deny your constituents the right to purchase a puppy sourced from reputable breeders and provide these dogs with a loving and caring forever home.

PIJAC_Likins_Unf_SB625

Uploaded by: Likins, Robert

Position: UNF



**PET INDUSTRY JOINT
ADVISORY COUNCIL**
1615 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Tel: 202-452-1525

**TESTIMONY TO THE MARYLAND SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE IN OPPOSITION TO SB625, INTERNET SALES OF
DOMESTIC ANIMALS, FROM THE PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PIJAC) ON 27 FEBRUARY 2020**

Position: Opposed

As an organization that routinely supports legislative efforts to advance the welfare of animals, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) appreciates the opportunity to share our views and expertise on Senate Bill 625 regarding the establishment of an animal abuse registry. PIJAC and our members across Maryland respectfully request that the House Judiciary Committee decline to take action on the bill.

We in the responsible pet industry don't just care about animals, we care for them on a daily basis. For many years PIJAC has provided a highly respected animal care certification program intended to ensure that employees are well trained in the care of the animals they sell; a program that is widely utilized not only by persons in the commercial pet trade but also shelters and humane societies throughout the country and one that has even been adopted as a statutory standard in some states. PIJAC has worked closely with the USDA on effective implementation of the Animal Welfare Act for pets since its inception almost fifty years ago, and has joined hands with state agencies to ensure adoption and enforcement of appropriate regulatory standards. Our association has long been recognized as the voice for a responsible and humane pet trade.

Senate Bill 625 would not only make it illegal for anyone to purchase a dog or cat from an out of state breeder unless they then traveled out of state to pick the animal up themselves, but it would eliminate virtually every breeder in the state of Maryland. Just the act of having a website would likely be enough to run them afoul of this bill and taking a credit card or PayPal payment certainly would. If the intent of SB625 is to make pet ownership a privilege of the wealthy, then it certainly delivers.

Internet pet sales can certainly be a problem. There are numerous sellers who do not have the USDA license that they should, and it is estimated that up to half of the dogs for sale on the internet do not even exist. The solution to this is transparency and enforcement, not creating an environment where the responsible entities have been driven out of the market while leaving only the disreputable ones. Those unscrupulous organizations then further protect themselves from the intent of this bill by labeling themselves rescues and avoiding any scrutiny whatsoever.

Please reject Senate Bill 625.

Thank you for your consideration,

Robert Likins
Vice President of Government Affairs
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC)