

Statement of Joan Galvin, Kelley Drye & Warren
House Delegate Committee on Economic Matters
March 19, 2021

Chairman Davis and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joan Galvin and I am a Government Relations specialist with over 25 years' experience as an advocate on behalf of those who work with animals. In addition, I am a member of the Animal Law practice at Kelley Drye & Warren with a focus on the U.S. Animal Welfare Act.

I testify today in opposition to SB 103 as currently written. While the premise of the proposal is to improve conditions for puppies that are bred for sale, the bill fails on several fronts. Its broad-brush approach fails to distinguish between substandard operations and those that have worked hard to achieve high standards. The majority of breeders in Maryland (and throughout the country) are licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and subject to inspections and specific animal welfare standards. Additionally, breeders who work with PuppySpot, an online concierge service that matches puppies with people (and one of the targets of the bill), must adhere to even higher standards which are science based and peer reviewed by an independent advisory committee which includes veterinarians, animal ethicists and behavioral specialists.

The bill unfairly targets small family run businesses, both breeders and retailers, many who have been breeding dogs for generations and whose livelihoods are now at risk. Furthermore, the bill does nothing to address substandard operations and limits Marylanders choices when seeking a new family pet.

At the Senate hearing, the bill's sponsor, Sen. Kramer, was openly hostile and disrespectful to witnesses from the pet community. His disdain and contempt were on full display, browbeating speakers in an act of political theater that was appalling to watch. He has refused invitations to visit breeders or to meet with the very companies he disparages. The fact is that this bill does nothing to protect dogs, but instead demonizes and shuts lawful Maryland businesses operated by hardworking people who simply want to provide Marylanders the opportunity to bring dogs and cats into their families.

I hope that the committee will open its hearts and minds to the testimony you hear today, and ask yourselves whether this bill is merely a politically motivated "solution in search of a problem".

Thank you for your consideration.

Joan Galvin
Kelley Drye & Warren