



To: House Economic Matter Committee

From: Becky Schmidt - General Manager, Charm City Puppies, LLC.

RE: Opposition to SB 103

My name is Becky Schmidt, and I am the manager of Charm City Puppies. I have been with Charm City Puppies since the store opened in 2012. Before working at Charm City Puppies, I worked at another Maryland business in the pet industry, Today's Pet. Combined I have been in the industry for thirteen years and have proudly matched countless Maryland residents with their loving pets.

As the store manager for Charm City Puppies, I have visited our breeders personally. I have met our breeders; I have met the parents of our puppies and stand by the quality of their kennels. As an inspected and regulated business, we offer our customers complete transparency, as well as consumer protection.

Without businesses like ours, how will Marylanders obtain their next pet?

One option is the internet, and the internet is riddled with pet sale scams. Internet pet sale scams are on the rise, while the demand for puppies increases and activists attempt to put responsible stores out of business. This bill will cause scams to continue to skyrocket. We speak to at least two potential clients a day who have been scammed out of deposits on the internet and countless others who have struggled to find their next pet.

The second option is a backyard breeder. Backyard breeders can be referred to as private breeders or hobby breeders. No matter the term, these breeders are not professional breeders. They do not have the knowledge and experience required to maintain the same animal husbandry practices as a professional breeder. Most backyard breeders do not require any health testing and are subject to no standards, no regulations, and no inspections.

Breeding is not simply allowing your two household pets to mate. Purchasing from a professional breeder means that your next pet's parents were carefully selected for ideal breed standards and health and behavioral characteristics.

Hobby breeders can run the gamut from responsible to abusive, as there is no oversight and no standards. Even the best backyard breeders will never be able to meet the demand for purebred puppies in the state of Maryland.

The last option would be a **shelter or rescue**. We have many customers who are looking for a specific breed that will fit their lifestyle. Whether they are looking for a puppy that doesn't shed or won't exceed a certain weight as an adult, they need a purebred or designer breed with reliable characteristics. These puppies do not exist in shelters.

Puppies in shelters are practically nonexistent, but **purebred** puppies in shelters do not exist. Warranties and protections for Maryland consumers also do not exist in shelters and rescues. Shelters and rescues are not regulated or inspected. Like backyard breeders, shelters and rescues are subject to no oversight and no standards.

I strongly believe that Marylanders deserve the right to choose where they obtain their next pet. Rescue animals are appropriate for some people but are not the correct choice for many others. Marylanders deserve the right to have the breed of their choice. They deserve the right to have a puppy. They deserve the right to have a dog that doesn't have an unknown history at best and a history of behavioral and health problems at worst.

I urge you to support Marylander's right to obtain their next pet from a responsible, regulated, and inspected source. I welcome any questions and would be happy to take any interested parties on a tour of my store. Maryland residents shouldn't have limited access to quality professionally bred puppies because of extremist animal activist's agendas.