

## **SB 103 Bailing Out Benji**

Uploaded by: Callison, Mindi

Position: FAV

**January 21, 2021**  
**SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

SB103  
NO MORE PUPPY and KITTEN MILLS ACT of 2021

FAVORABLE

Honorable Finance Committee Members,

My name is Mindi Callison and I am the Founder and Executive Director of Bailing Out Benji. I am speaking in favor of SB103 today. Our nonprofit exists to research and investigate the commercial breeding industry of companion animals and trace them as they move across the country from these facilities to pet stores and online customers. To give you an idea of the scope of our work, to date we have connected over 350 pet stores in 32 states to the thousands facilities they buy from. All of our research can be independently verified by the Department of Agriculture.

I want to speak about the dog brokering world and the lack of transparency that exists. Our research has recently connected one Maryland store to a two-time Horrible Hundred puppy mill broker in Ohio. This facility also operates as a sham rescue and nonprofit in order to sell the same commercially bred puppies as 'rescues' - in a clear act of consumer fraud. This puppy-laundering scheme is a nationwide effort started by dog brokers in order to skirt local and state laws. Both California and Iowa have cracked down on these sham businesses, but it is happening here in Maryland as well. Due to our research, we uncovered that the owners of 'Maryland Puppies Online' located in Bel Air operate 'Little Puppies Online' out of Mount Vernon, Ohio and 'Dogs to the Rescue' also out of Ohio. Due to their ongoing Federal violations, this facility has been named one of the worst puppy mills in the country twice but that doesn't stop them from operating brokering websites in at least five different states.

From the business side, stores and brokering websites such as [PuppySpot.com](http://PuppySpot.com) use online ordering systems, much like Amazon or Walmart, to add puppies and kittens to their cart and have them shipped to their business or customers for resale. These transactions are all done online with little-to-no verification that the breeding facilities are humane and without violations. Through every step of the puppy ordering, buying and re-selling business there is a concerning lack of transparency. The consumers buying these puppies have no way of knowing for sure where they were born.

Because of this, we strongly believe that SB103 would close the loophole in the previous law and would add much needed consumer protection in the state of Maryland.

Thank you so much for your time and for your attention.

Warmest Regards,

Mindi Callison

**Sources:**

**Iowa Department of Agriculture Dismantles Sham Nonprofit Operated by USDA Dog Broker:**

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/local/columnists/courtney-crowder/2020/03/30/iowa-dog-adoption-puppy-mill-national-puppy-laundering-ring-dismantled/5079937002/>

**California Passes Stronger State Law to Stop Sham Rescues:**

<https://timesofsandiego.com/politics/2020/09/20/governor-signs-todd-glorias-bill-ending-puppy-mill-sales-in-california/>

**Ohio Dog Broker Starts Sham Rescue (video)**

<https://www.nbc4i.com/news/local-news/local-dog-broker-cited-in-horrible-hundred-report-starts-rescue-causes-controversy/>

**PuppySpot Reviews from the Better Business Bureau:**

<https://www.bbb.org/us/fl/hollywood/profile/pet-services/puppyspot-group-llc-0633-22003405/complaints>

## **SB 103 Votes for Animals**

Uploaded by: Radov, Lisa

Position: FAV



## MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411  
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

January 21, 2021

To: Senate Finance Committee

From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.

Re: Business Regulation - Retail Pet Stores – Modifications (No  
More Puppy- and Kitten - Mills Act of 2021) – SB 103 – 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 – Modifications (No More Puppy- and Kitten - Mills Act of 2021) – SB 103.

Maryland passed historic legislation in 2018 becoming the second state to ban the sale of puppies and kittens in pet stores, with the intention of closing the door to the puppy mills industry. Many thanks to those of you who were on this committee and helped pass that humane legislation. Unfortunately, the puppy mills pipeline is still operating in our state due to a few pet stores taking advantage of loopholes in the 2018 law. I have personally visited the parking lot of Just Puppies in Towson near where I live and seen the windows and doors covered in paper to obscure public view. There are signs that say “By Appointment Only” and “Please call in Advance” signs on their door.

In 2020, Senator Kramer sponsored a version of this legislation that passed unanimously in the Senate 45-0. It crossed over into the House where it passed second reader but ran out of time.

Let's close the loopholes in the 2018 law and cut off the flow of puppies and kittens from out-of-state puppy mills. We want to ensure that Marylanders are not supporting a cruel industry that treats puppies and kittens like inventory ----- and not our best friends.

Let's continue make Maryland a state that says to NO profit from puppy mills!

I would like to thank Senator Kramer for his sponsorship of SB 103 and urge a favorable report.

*Let Kindness Reign, Vote Humane*

WWW.VOTEANIMALS.ORG



# **SB103.Testimony.Yassin.Jan21.2021.II.pdf**

Uploaded by: Yassin, Sara

Position: FAV

**January 21, 2021**  
**SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**SB103**  
**NO MORE PUPPY and KITTEN MILLS ACT of 2021**

**FAVORABLE**

**KEY POINTS:**

- \*MARYLAND PET STORES ARE NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH ORIGINAL ACT OF 2018*
- \*PET STORES SUED THE STATE OF MARYLAND IN FEDERAL COURT AND LOST*
- \*PET STORES ARE SELLING PUPPIES "BY APPOINTMENT" TO CIRCUMVENT LAW*
- \*LOOPHOLES NEED TO BE CLOSED TO ENFORCE ORIGINAL ACT PASSED IN 2018*

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Sara Yassin, the Maryland Team Leader of Bailing Out Benji, a national non-profit focusing on puppy mill education. I am in support of SB103 because our Maryland pet stores are not in compliance with the pet store bill that was passed and signed in 2018. They continuously sell puppies to the public on an appointment basis deliberately dismissing our law which bans pet store puppy purchases.

Our law went into effect on January 1, 2020. This legislature graciously gave the pet stores over a year and a half to comply with the new law. In August 2019, the pet stores filed a lawsuit against the State of Maryland declaring the law violated the commerce clause. Last February I witnessed two days of a fair hearing in The United States District Court. Judge Hollander delivered a 79 -page



ruling citing that “Protecting consumers, reducing financial support for mill breeders, and encouraging pet adoption are indisputably legitimate state interests.” The pet stores lost their suit against Maryland yet they continued to sell puppies to the public in defiance of our law.

I, along with other animal advocates, exposed their deception with an investigation which was aired on Fox5DC TV this past August which can be found here: <https://www.fox5dc.com/news/maryland-pet-shops-still-selling-puppies-despite-new-ban>. The investigated reporter even witnessed the delivery van delivering puppies in the back alley behind one store. The City of Rockville voided Just Puppies’ license in September yet they still continued selling puppies.

We passed this law to stop the influx of puppy mill puppies coming into our state. Our state does not want to support inhumane treatment of companion animals. I might also add that during this pandemic we certainly do not want people coming into our state from less regulated Midwest states to deliver puppies. Puppies are not essential items.

While the Attorney General has ruled that the “open to the public” language is not permission to sell by appointment, to ensure enforcement of this law I urge the Committee to close this loophole so that the pet stores will comply with the law we historically passed and signed making Maryland the second state to ban puppy mill puppy purchases.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara Yassin

# **SB 103- Testimony PuppySpot 20210121.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kreinberg, Josh

Position: UNF



## **Senate Finance Committee**

### **SB 103**

### **Position: Oppose**

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

**Senate Bill 103 as written:**

- **Limits consumer choice: especially, during a time when people are limited in ability to travel.**
- **Does not address concerns with substandard breeder practices.**
- **Fails to distinguish between breeders adhering to high standards and those who engage in substandard practices.**

**As a trusted service helping connect people with healthy, happy puppies over the past 15 years, and a community of dog lovers with over 9,000 five-star reviews, PuppySpot:**

- **Encourages the committee to amend this legislation to focus attention on substandard breeding practices.**
- **Wants Maryland residents to be able to obtain puppies from reputable breeders and dealers.**
- **Encourages the consideration of alternative legislation to create a taskforce to study breeding facilities and the role of online portals between customers and breeders.**

My name is Josh Kreinberg. I am the Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel of PuppySpot. We are a USDA licensed and inspected service helping people find puppies through our network of screened and vetted responsible breeders. Last year, we helped approximately 500 Maryland residents find their new best friends, including a number of Make-A-Wish children and their families. All of these new puppy owners were trapped at home, socially distant, like the rest of America, suffering anxiously through the global pandemic. We were honored to have been able to help so many during these trying times.

Senate Bill 103, as currently written, limits consumer choice and does not address concerns with substandard breeding practices. 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 who adhere to the highest standards of health and welfare and those who engage in substandard practices. Instead, we encourage the committee to amend this legislation to focus attention on substandard breeding practices while continuing to allow Maryland residents to obtain puppies from reputable breeders and dealers. PuppySpot would also encourage the Committee to consider alternative legislation to create a taskforce to study breeding facilities and the role of online portals between customers and breeders to better inform the Senate on the most effective approaches to dealing with concerns about animal health and welfare.

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.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has created a new challenge for families in Maryland and other states seeking to add a new four-legged companion into their lives. PuppySpot has played a key role in delivering happiness during these unprecedented times. Combining our network of screened and vetted breeders with our logistical capabilities, we have been able to meet the needs of Marylanders who had been struggling to find a pet without leaving their homes.



PuppySpot is particularly proud of the work we are doing with the Make-A-Wish Foundation nationally, and most especially the work we have begun with Make-A-Wish' Mid-Atlantic chapter which includes Maryland. Travel restrictions, delayed or cancelled commercial flights, and other factors caused by the COVID-19 pandemic combined to limit the ability of the Make-A-Wish organization to grant travel wishes. As a result, Make-A-Wish was hit with a huge uptick in puppy wishes as children wished to have a new best friend that would be by their side. By partnering with PuppySpot, Make-A-Wish has been able to continue its mission to grant life-changing wishes to children with critical illnesses. In the past month alone, PuppySpot has been part of two wish grants in Maryland-- one for a young boy with a blood disorder who wished for a Labradoodle, and another for a young girl with leukemia who wished for a Portuguese Water Dog.

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 Make-A-Wish, Sydney's Soldiers Always, METAvivor, and Wounded Warrior Project.

#### Wish Come True for Maryland Child with Blood Disorder



#### PuppySpot Celebrates 50th Puppy Wish with Make-A-Wish



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,

**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.

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.



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

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.

Continuing our commitment to healthy, happy puppies, we are working with American Humane, the country's first national humane organization. For more than a hundred years, American Humane has been first in promoting the welfare of animals and strengthening the bond between people and animals. American Humane's animal welfare experts, researchers, and veterinarians are examining PuppySpot's breeders, practices and policies. They have subsequently established a set of comprehensive standards and an audit tool. They are now in the process of auditing the breeders in our network. Through our internal auditing, we have dismissed 14 breeders for failing to comply with our standards. Nearly all of our breeders that have been audited by American Humane have passed on their first inspection. Those that have had minor deficiencies (those not involving imminent threats to animal health or welfare) are given the option to correct the deficiency or be dismissed from our network. If, at any time we discover an imminent threat to animal health or welfare, the breeder is immediately dismissed from our network and USDA is notified. Since we are not a government entity, we are not subject to due process requirements and are not required to offer any appeal. As such, breeders have no appeal from our decisions.

**AMERICAN HUMANE**  
FIRST TO SERVE™



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. One of the services we partner with the AKC to offer are OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) health clinics for adult dog testing. 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. We describe our processes on our website at <https://www.puppyspot.com/puppyspot-standards>.

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 (a team of veterinarians and scientists, who are former regulators from the USDA, legislative and regulatory experts and animal ethicists experienced in breeding and shelter medicine) set standards that are above and beyond anything set by the government (the bios of our Scientific Advisory Board are also set forth on our website).

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.

PuppySpot Delivers Joy to U.S. Army Veteran



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.





## Protect Against Pet Scams

Beware of these **RED FLAGS** when looking for a puppy

- Wiring Money**  
Never wire money via Western Union or Moneygram to anyone you have only met online.  
Scammers have begun using peer-to-peer payment platforms such as Venmo, CashApp, Google Pay, Apple Pay, Facebook Payments, and Zelle to receive payments.
- Suspicious Photos**  
Beware of puppy images that look like stock photos- perfectly posed or where puppy doesn't look real.  
Conduct an online image search of the photo to see if it is posted elsewhere.
- ABC Bad Grammar or Misspellings**  
Be sensitive to strange language choices in puppy listings or communications. The vast majority of scammers are from foreign countries.
- Bogus Stories/Excuses**  
Scammers will often come up with complicated reasons why they need immediate wire transfers or can't deliver the puppy to you, consistently tied to current events.
- Refusal to Supply Documentation**  
A responsible breeder, shelter, or rescue organization will provide registration, vaccination, and veterinary health records upon request.

**HAVE YOU BEEN A VICTIM OF FRAUD?**


BBB ScamTracker has 907 reports on this type of fraud and a Federal Trade Commission report found some 37,000 complaints involving pets.

Email:  
fightpuppyscams@puppyspot.com

Call the Federal Trade Commission:  
1-877-FTC-HELP

Call Department of Homeland Security:  
866-DHS-2-ICE (866-347-2423)  
(from U.S. and Canada)

Contact the FBI cybercrimes unit

 [www.puppyspot.com](http://www.puppyspot.com)

### Fight Pet Scams

As reputable sources continue to be scrutinized, the rate of pet scams continues to rise. PuppySpot is working to fight pet scams by reporting as many fraudulent sites as possible—we even run a reporting service on our website where we gather information from members of the public who have been scammed in order to assist in reporting them. Online pet scams are more prevalent than ever amid the pandemic. Individuals are seeking the companionship of a furry friend and many don't know where to turn. As travel restrictions and quarantines continue, many are unable to visit a local animal shelter or breeder in person.

We publish tips for consumers (including those set forth here) and always advise doing as much research as possible before making the decision to purchase a pet online, or in person. Recently, I was interviewed by Yahoo! Finance and Money.com and we previously appeared on Good Morning America to warn the public about these scams and offer tips to watch out for (we have links to many of these articles and appearances on our "In the News" section of our website at <https://www.puppyspot.com/about-us>). Some of these include checking sources, watching out for bad grammar, and avoiding wiring money via Western Union or MoneyGram. To help avoid pet scams, consumers should be made aware of these red flags and do research on the responsible sources that exist.

### Good Intentions, But Need Additional Review

Our point is, 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 obtain a puppy sourced from reputable breeders and provide these dogs with a loving and caring forever home. We believe the residents of Maryland deserve at least the opportunity to have the issue studied to properly gather the facts, evaluate the scientific, health and animal welfare practices already in place to determine what should be done in the best interests of the families and most importantly the dogs involved as a next step.

# **Maryland Testimony SB103.pdf**

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 SB103 FROM THE PET INDUSTRY  
JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PIJAC) ON 21 JANUARY 2021**

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 103 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.

Maryland SB103 would prohibit anyone in the state from selling any dog or cat at any location other than where the animal was bred. This will harm consumer choice and do nothing to stop inhumane breeding. In short, the only options for most consumers would be to choose between the limited options available at a rescue or shelter or travel out of state. They could not have the animal transported to the state by a USDA licensed transporter, nor could they arrange for a pet store to have the dog or cat delivered to a store where it could undergo the appropriate quarantine and health checks before making an appointment to meet it.

Even the limited number of local breeders would be required to have any prospective pet owner come to their home to purchase the companion animal. This requirement directly contradicts the health and social distancing guidelines in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and increases public health risk.

This bill would not only severely limit access to the pet of choice for Maryland consumers, but it also disproportionately impacts those without the means to travel to another state in search of the companion animal that would be the best fit for their individual situation.

Thank you for your consideration,

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

# **Charm City Puppies Opposition to S B 103.pdf**

Uploaded by: Martz, Travis

Position: UNF



**Written Testimony- Becky Schmidt  
General Manager, Charm City Puppies, LLC.**

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 under this law?**

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.

**PLEASE OPPOSE SENATE BILL 103. WE ENCOURAGE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY RESPONSIBLE BREEDING AND ANIMAL SOURCING IN MARYLAND TO PROTECT ALL MARYLAND RESIDENTS.**

# **Dr. Slovon Opposition to SB 103.pdf**

Uploaded by: Martz, Travis

Position: UNF

**ERNEST A.SLOVON, DVM**  
**OWINGS MILLS VETEERINARY SERVICES**  
**6 STRAWHILL CT, OWINGS MILLS, MD 21117**

**410-935-9420**

**February 2021**

My name is Dr. Ernest Slovon. I'm a past president of the Greater Baltimore Veterinary Medical Association and a current board member. I'm past owner of the Owings Mills Animal & Bird Hospital, founding veterinarian for The Owings Mills Veterinary Center and have been associated with Just Puppies in Towson for 18 years. In my 35 years of veterinary practice I have been doing pet store related work for most of that time. Changes in the pet store industry have resulted in better care for the animals sold. Specifically, for Just Puppies I visit the store weekly to examine and issue health certificates for all new healthy arrivals and pets whose health certificates are over 30 days old. I instruct the store staff on which pets need treatment before being sold and have found they follow my directions diligently. Once I leave the store, if any pets require my attention they bring the pet to my hospital for treatment. The stores formula for success is centered on genuine care for the pets and an honest and comprehensive approach to health care.

Along with their generous health guarantee they have cultivated strong veterinary relationships. Simply put, they back up what they sell. Any veterinary issues with the puppies after the sale are treated at the stores expense, per their guarantee. When I end my first visit with a new pet owner from just puppies I ask them a question, I tell them it is my job to make sure their pet is healthy so what should you do if there is a problem? And if they don't know the answer, I tell them, Call Me! I also see pets acquired from breeders, hobbyist, and the internet. These places are unregulated and generally offer limited (3-7 days) or no health guaranty. The pets from these sources are not required to have any veterinary care at all and often don't. After the sale the consumer has limited options if there is an issue. There lies the big difference between store bought pets, and pets secured from other sources. The model that Just Puppies uses provides a limited health guarantee against genetic and hereditary defects for 1 year and an initial 30 day bumper to bumper coverage. These provisions protect the consumer and go above and beyond what is required. Their success is due to their ethics, comprehensive preventive care and a strong veterinary relationship every step of the way coupled with unparalleled customer care after the sale. Limiting sales to only local animals limits the purchasers choices, and given a choice, the benefits of securing a pet from the store are tremendous compared with unregulated backyard and internet sales.



# **Just Puppies - Opposition SB 103 Testiment.pdf**

Uploaded by: Martz, Travis

Position: UNF



**January 21, 2020**

**RE: SENATE BILL 103 (SENATOR GRAMER)**

**POSITION: OPPOSE**

Shelters, rescues, backyard breeders, online sales, and brick-and-mortar pet stores comprise the Maryland market.

Maryland only regulates our stores. Several agencies, including local animal controls, regulate us. When consumers come to us, they know we are an accountable, legitimate business that offers consumer protections. Neither shelters, rescues, nor the black market offer protections for consumers. Few online sales provide consumer protections.

How will your Bill benefit dogs? What will your Bill accomplish? Consumers will continue to find puppies, but your bill forces them to obtain dogs from black market breeders, non-profits, and scams instead of legitimate businesses. Instead of reducing substandard kennels, the Bill will increase the number of substandard kennels and backyard breeders. What is the logic of this Bill? **There are three bricks and mortar retail pet stores in Maryland that offer consumer protections and health guarantees. How does Senator Kramer's pet peeve against us solve his allegations that we spread sick animals? There are no facts to support the sponsor's arguments. There are no valid attorney general complaints against us either.**

After California outlawed brick-and-mortar pet stores, chaos erupted. Imports of diseased animals, black market scams, and backyard breeding increased. Consumer protections disappeared entirely in California.

If your Bill fails to protect the consumer or curb substandard, unregulated breeders, what are you accomplishing?

We advocate for clean, well operated, certified kennels and inspected stores that respect their animals. We believe the consumer should have protections.

Yours truly,

Mitchell Thomson  
Owner/President  
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