



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Chairman Meyer, Chairman Roy, Ranking Members Chapin and McKinney, and Members of the Environment Committee, I would like to thank you for holding this public hearing on HB 5493, AA Establishing a Dog and Cat Lemon Law.

The idea behind HB 5493 came to my attention from one of our former colleagues, Ken Bernard, who dedicates much of his time working on behalf of our animal population, especially dogs. "Puppy Mills" are large commercial breeders that do not have concern for the animals they are using to breed or sell. I find the mistreatment of these dogs in these puppy mills appalling. They simply want a supply of "cute" puppies to sell and make a profit. The problem is that the dogs used to breed these puppies are kept in small, cramped cages that are not cleaned regularly. This is no doubt, animal cruelty.

Although there does not seem to be a problem with puppy mills actually existing in our state, but there are many pet shops that purchase their puppies from mills that are passing the puppies onto our residents and many operate on the internet. These puppies often end up with diseases due to the poor conditions they are born and raised in.

One example I'm aware of involved a family that purchased a puppy for Christmas through one of these Puppy Mills. The puppy was found to have parasites, kennel cough, and soon developed dog pneumonia. Sadly, this family paid over \$10,000 in veterinarian bills, only to have the puppy die at the vets a couple of weeks later. Unfortunately this family purchased a second puppy that, come to find out, was from the same litter as the first puppy, and now that second puppy is also experiencing medical problems.

HB 5493 would provide the Department of Agriculture the ability to increase fines to shops that provide a sick dog or cat to one of our residents if the shop is maintained in an "unsanitary, inhumane, or otherwise unsatisfactory manner." This fine would include the cost of veterinary care to the animal as well as double the price of the animal. The amount of the fine, up to twice the veterinarian costs, would be passed on to the pet owner as compensation for the economic and emotional impact caused by the breeders' lack of care. All pet shops and breeders would be required to post this information for their customers.

Again, I thank the committee for holding this public hearing and urge your committee to favorably report this or one of the similar bills on the agenda today. No Connecticut family should have to experience the emotional and financial woes of purchasing an animal from these puppy mills.

If you have any questions, I would welcome them at this time.