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*TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 9, 2009*

I appreciate the opportunity to support House Bill 5801, An Act Prohibiting the Sale of Dogs Obtained from Puppy Mills.

This legislation would specifically ban sales by pet stores or breeders of dogs that are obtained from puppy mills. Puppy mills are defined as any facility where dogs are housed in a cage that denies adequate exercise, food, protection from the weather or other injury.

Puppy mills, located primarily in the Midwest and the South, breed dogs for sale under desperately inhumane conditions. These mills treat animals as chattel, churning out thousands of dogs for profit. Some pet stores in Connecticut have purchased dogs from puppy mills, sometimes unknowingly. State law must ensure that the burden is on the pet store or breeder to know how the dogs have been bred.

Connecticut has tough regulations regarding the sale of dogs. Pet shops must be licensed, must provide purchasers with specific information about each dog, including the state where the dog was born. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22-344d. Any dog imported into this state from another state must be accompanied by a certificate of health issued no more than 30 days prior to importation by a veterinarian. This certificate of health must confirm that the dog does not have any infectious, contagious or communicable disease. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22-354.

House Bill 5801 ensures that dogs are not imported from puppy mills. Retailers could require a certification from the supplier as to breeder and origin. The committee should consider civil and, possibly, criminal penalties for suppliers who violate this law or lie on their certification.

Connecticut prohibits the inhumane and cruel treatment of dogs. We should stop sales of dogs by allowing the sale of dogs from puppy mills that treat them cruelly and inhumanely.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of House Bill 5801.