

Testimony of Adrien M. Zap

Veterinary Technician, Humane Society of the United States National Disaster Animal Response Team
Member, Connecticut Votes for Animals

In Opposition to House Bill No. 5118

An Act Concerning Certificates of Origin for Dogs Sold by Pet Shop Licensees

Environment Committee

February 22, 2010

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and fellow Environment Committee members, I thank you for this opportunity to express my **opposition to House Bill 5118**.

I am a lifetime Connecticut resident, University of Connecticut alumnus, and a registered voter in the city of Stamford, CT. I am a veterinary technician and since 2006, have served as a member of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) National Animal Disaster Response Team (N-DART).

On August 21, 2007, state authorities and HSUS raided J'aime Kennels – a puppy mill in Buxton, Maine. As an N-DART veterinary responder, I was one of over forty volunteers involved in the largest puppy mill raid in Maine state history. N-DART assisted local veterinarians and animal rescue groups in establishing an on-site emergency shelter for over 350 dogs and puppies until they could be legally transferred to the state's care and moved off the property. We provided veterinary care for the ill, malnourished, neglected dogs. Each dog was photographed, its condition documented, and recorded for the state's case against the owners of the puppy mill.

Since this experience in Maine, I have lobbied for animal welfare on the state and federal levels. I am very proud that Connecticut signed a Puppy Mill Law in 2009. Among other things, this law requires pet stores to: maintain a Certificate of Origin (COO) on each puppy offered for sale, conspicuously post the information in each COO within 10 feet of the location where the dog is displayed for sale, and file each COO with the Department of Agriculture no later than two days after such sale.

House Bill 5118 would eliminate this filing requirement and allow each pet store to keep its COO at the pet store for up to a year, viewable **only** by the Department of Agriculture. This prevents the general public from accessing these records, thereby denying use of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). House Bill 5118 allows Connecticut pet stores to police themselves, with virtually no public oversight of the illegal or inhumane puppy mill trade.

The 2009 Puppy Mill Law is necessary to regulate and maintain animal welfare in the state of Connecticut. Currently, this law is **not** adequately enforced. Bill 5118 will **further prevent** enforcement of the animal welfare in Connecticut, and leave countless animal to suffer in pet stores across the state.

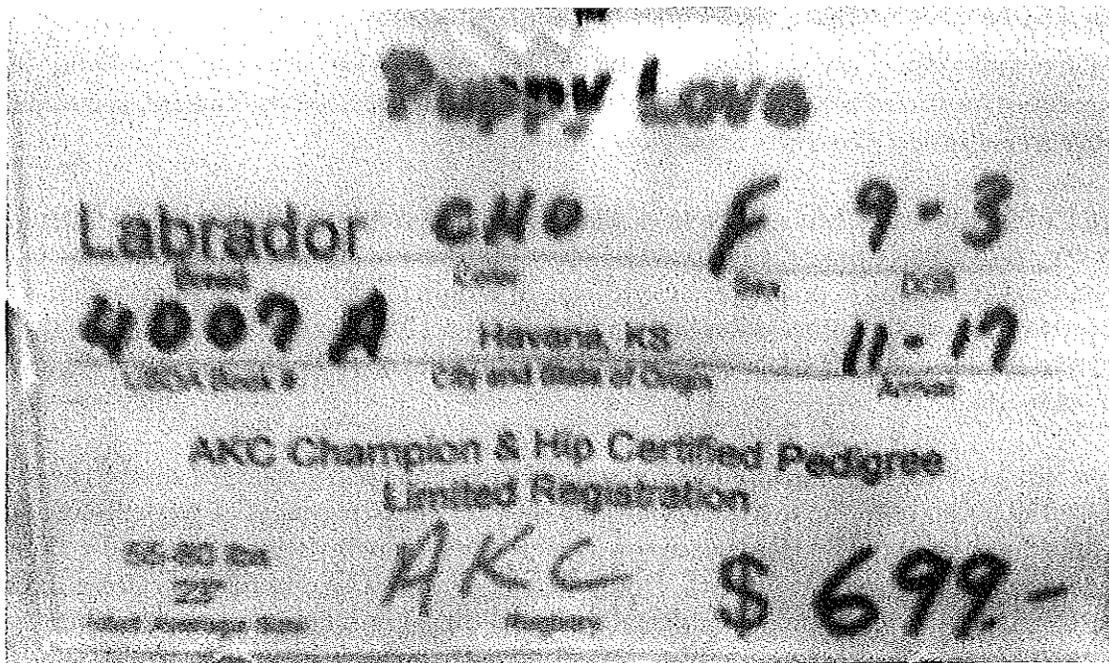
The following is testimony of my experience at Puppy Love, 37 Lake Avenue Ext., Danbury, CT 06810, on February 13, 2010:

Puppy Love of Danbury is in violation of the Connecticut General Statutes, Section 22-354(b):

- Many cages at Puppy Love did not contain Certificate of Origin (COO) cards. Those cages that did have COO cards lacked the required information as outlined previously.
- The following information was absent from all cards on display in the store on February 13, 2010:

"Name and address of the person, firm or corporation that bred such dog and of any person, firm or corporation that sold such dog to such pet shop licensee."

There were approximately 50 puppies for sale at Puppy Love. Many cages contained two or more dogs. Several dogs showed signs of lethargy, abdominal pain and had loose, discolored stool in their cages. These cages were not adequately cleaned or sanitized, and the store had a very distinct, foul odor of fecal matter. The COO cards were handwritten in different color inks on small cards. I photographed numerous cards that violated this statute, as well as cages that showed potential disease or neglect.



Example of non-compliant Certificate of Origin – Puppy Love, Danbury.



Feces in cage with two puppies; puppy straining to pass loose stool – Puppy Love.

The following is testimony of my experience at *The Pet Company, Store #28, Danbury Fair Mall, 7 Backus Avenue, Danbury, CT 06810 on February 13, 2010:*

The Pet Company of Danbury, Connecticut is also in violation of Section 22-354(b):

- The COO cards lacked the required information outlined in this section.
- The following information was absent from all cards on display in the store on February 13, 2010:

“Address of the person, firm or corporation that bred such dog and of any person, firm or corporation that sold such dog to such pet shop licensee.”

There were nine puppies for sale at The Pet Company. The COO cards at The Pet Company listed Hunte and Lambriar as the suppliers of their puppies. In recent years, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) cited the Hunte Corporation of Goodman, Missouri with numerous violations of Animal Welfare Act Regulations, including: sale of puppies under the required minimum age of eight weeks, sale/transport of puppies without required documentation, and inadequate housing enclosures.² Lambriar, Inc, of Mahaska, Kansas, has also been cited by USDA inspectors for numerous, gross violations of Animal Welfare Act Regulations. Puppies at the Lambriar facility were frequent found to be

lacking veterinary medical care, food, and water.³ I photographed numerous cards that violated this statute.

UNITED PET SUPPLY, INC. PET COMPANY

Breed Italian Greyhound Sex M

ID # 159651 Birthday 10/7/09

My Veterinarian's Name Is DR. Baff

Located At Plumtrees Animal Hospital

I was initially examined here on _____

I was raised by Elizabeth Rohes in OK

And supplied to you by Lambriar in KS

Examples of non-compliant
COO – The Pet Company,
Danbury, CT.

UNITED PET SUPPLY, INC. PET COMPANY

Breed Italian Greyhound Sex M

ID # 159688 Birthday 9/19/09

My Veterinarian's Name Is DR. BAFF

Located At plumtrees Animal Hospital

I was initially examined here on _____

I was raised by Arrey Ewins in MO

And supplied to you by Hunk in MO

^{2,3} Source, USDA APHIS Animal Care Active Search website

Puppy mill puppies from all over the country and from corporations such as Hunte and Lambriar are available for sale in Connecticut. People are sadly unaware of the inhumane cycle that produces those cute little puppies in the pet store window.

I have worked as a veterinary technician for over ten years. During this time, I have seen dozens of puppy mill puppies purchased at local pet shops by unaware consumers. Seeing puppy mill dogs in veterinary hospitals made me aware of the health problems, diseases, and abuse that puppy mills breed. But there is something about that time-tested saying, "Seeing is believing" that really rang true for me. What appeared to be an idyllic farm house at the end of a dirt road was actually a scene from a horror film. Hundreds of dogs and puppies were crammed into a few dozen cages in a small barn. The smell was overwhelming. Dead puppies were left in cages with their littermates. Dogs were missing legs, ears, tails, and eyes. Mange and ringworm were rampant.

Once I visited the J'aime Kennel and experienced a puppy mill first-hand, I could no longer turn a blind eye to their suffering and cruelty. For every one puppy mill dog that finds its way to a loving home, there are hundreds more – if not thousands – that will never know life outside a cage. After witnessing the horrors of the Buxton puppy mill, I see how vital legislation is to preventing and prosecuting animal cruelty.

The proposed amendment to Raised Bill 5118 states:

“For a period of not less than one year after the date of issuance, each pet shop licensee shall retain an electronic or paper copy of any certificate of origin issued by such pet shop licensee to a purchaser. During such one-year period, each pet shop licensee shall make such electronic or paper copy available for inspection by the Department of Agriculture upon request by the department.”¹

If the necessary COO cards are non-existent, there is no additional benefit in requiring pet shop licensees to retain copies. Many Connecticut pet stores (such as Puppy Love and The Pet Company) are not complying with current general statute laws regarding paperwork for puppies. Therefore, I feel strongly that these stores cannot reliably maintain the important COO information on file. The Environmental Committee must require Connecticut pet stores to regularly submit this paperwork to the Department of Agriculture. Without these strict regulations and enforcement, the insidious puppy mill industry will continue to breed and sell misery to pet stores in Connecticut.

Thank you,

Adrien M Zap
38 Carlisle Place
Stamford, CT 06902
(203) 252-7639
adrienzap@yahoo.com

