

Testimony Of Lauren Kaufman, Puppies of Westport to the Environment Committee on SB 445

My husband and I opened Puppies of Westport to bring joy into the lives of families. And we have succeeded at that. Our puppies are in close to 6000 homes in CT and beyond. There is no greater satisfaction than getting calls or visits from clients who tell us what a positive impact we have had on their lives.

We recently contacted over 1000 pre 2012 purchasers by phone and even we were thrilled to find that we had a 97% satisfaction rate among all those we contacted.

But when we started back in 2006 we never could have imagined that we would encounter the kind of vicious attacks that animal activists have directed at us.

We work very hard to insure that all of our breeders have clean USDA inspections and that they share our concern for the health and well-being of their puppies and their parents. And what have we gotten in return?

Name calling, death threats, personal attacks, and more that without question rises to the level of a hate crime and even the equivalent of the bullying that just about everyone is so quick to condemn for the emotional toll it takes on the recipient.

Just yesterday, someone wrote on Facebook that I would readily sell a puppy to someone who told me they were taking it home to eat it. Another wrote that we use drugs to sedate all of our puppies to keep them calm.

When I said I think of all my puppies as my grandchildren at a task force hearing, another speaker actually had the audacity to ridicule me by asking what grandmother would want to sell all of her grandchildren

In January a 23 year U Conn graduate was almost successful at breaking into our store at 2 in the morning with the express purpose of setting all of our puppies free onto Route 1 at near zero temperatures.

The fact is that the over 33000 Connecticut puppy store purchasers far outnumber all of the animal activists combined.

Every customer gets my cell number and they rarely hesitate to use it. I am there for my customers and more importantly, I am there for all of my puppies.

In addition to seeking ways to insure the health of puppies sold in pet stores, this Committee should be looking at ways to protect the rights of small business owners throughout the state who are being unfairly and illegally libeled by activists who want to impose their will on all of the citizens of our state.

The fact that this issue keeps getting raised by a small minority of activists year after year is taking a toll on me and my family.

This committee needs to consider all of the facts and understand that the activists will not stop trying to take bite after bite from the apple in the hope that you will eventually surrender and give them what they want just to make them go away.

I am hopeful you will resist that temptation and take a stand against the bullying and other despicable means that continue to be directed at innocent individuals and businesses that are filling the legitimate needs of thousands of consumers who prefer to get their dogs from the source of their choice.