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I've always adopted homeless dogs & cats, so like many people, I didn't understand the connection between puppy mills and pet shops, until I started researching. That's what brought me here today to speak.

I support [SB 445](#). But I strongly urge my CT legislators to amend it to include the following two requirements that were recommended by last year's bipartisan Task Force:

- 1. *an immediate ban on the sale of commercially-bred dogs in any new pet shop opening in CT***
- 2. *a phase-out of their sale in the 16 shops that now sell them***

To understand why these are crucial requirements, you have to know **three things**:

**1<sup>st</sup>**, commercial breeders are legally allowed to confine their dogs in inhumane quarters. The federal law governing them (ironically named the Animal Welfare Act) is in dire need of overhaul, and that's simply not going to happen. Believe it or not, under this act, all manner of unacceptable practices are allowed, such as tiny stacked cages with wire bottoms – *which means excrement falling onto the dogs in the cages below* - poorly-ventilated kennels, dirty food bowls, inadequate access to water, untreated illnesses and injuries, females confined 24/7 solely for breeding purposes, and females bred continually until they're no longer of any value to the owners of these places. Is it any wonder that puppy mill puppies have a high incidence of congenital diseases and other health problems?

**2<sup>nd</sup>**, there simply aren't enough USDA Inspectors to get around to all the commercial breeders in this country. And even when they do perform inspections, they apply standards that the average dog owner would reject as not being good enough to ensure the basic health and safety of the dogs.

**3<sup>rd</sup>**, in 2009, the CT Legislature passed a law requiring pet shops to furnish the State Dept of Agriculture with breeder and broker information for the pets they sell. That's what made it possible to establish the connection between the out-of-state commercial breeders aka puppy mills, and CT shops.

Incidentally, if anyone would like to know more about the sources currently being used by the 16 pet shops in this state that sell puppies, just read the 54-page report compiled and submitted as testimony to the Legislative Task Force last December, if you can get through it; I had to stop about half-way through because the deprivation and cruelty revealed was heartbreaking. But the statistics are there, in plain view.

[SB 445](#) as it stands, without those 2 requirements, does not provide adequate safeguards against animal abuse. In fact, sadly, it would allow the abuse to continue.

With regard to the 16 shop owners who would be directly affected by the phase-out, I understand that this requirement means they would have to find other sources from which to obtain dogs. And yes, this would be a change in their business practice. I was a small business owner in Bristol at one time, so I do appreciate their point of view about being forced to make the change. But my business suppliers didn't engage in animal abuse in order to deliver their product to me. If those pet shop proprietors want to sell puppies, they can most certainly find them at the Humane Society, at animal shelters, and through rescue groups. In doing so, they'll be following a humane pet store model that's becoming more popular across the country. Eventually, if enough people take a stand that eliminates the market for puppy mill dogs, puppy mills will eventually be eliminated. Let's take a firm step in that direction, and add these 2 requirements to [SB 445](#).

With regard to [HB 5416](#), the ban on so-called "gestation crates" in CT: Since CT farmers do not use them, and even well-known agribusinesses such as Smithfield Foods and Hormel have announced that they will end this hideous practice, it's not difficult to grasp that these contraptions function as slow torture chambers for the animals. You only need to look at one picture of sows lying on their sides in them, and understand that they're kept in them for YEARS on end, to have a visceral reaction to the

plight of these farm animals. In the name of all that is decent, let's support the best practices of CT farmers now, and not allow gestation crates to be used in CT in the future, please.

With regard to [HB 5080](#) which would allow bow & arrow hunting on private property on Sundays: First let me state that I have no problem with hunting, per se. And, while opposing this bill sounds like yet another government intrusion on the rights of the individual, upon closer examination, a more troubling problem emerges. It's the inherent problem with bow & arrow hunting - that the accuracy rates are comparatively low, resulting in more deer being seriously wounded and crippled than in gun hunting. If the wounded deer manages to get beyond the private property, the hunter can't legally follow it. The animal then suffers a slow and inhumane death. Furthermore, adding another day in the week for bow & arrow hunting is not an acceptable method of managing the deer population in CT. The more humane solution is for CT not to pass [HB 5080](#), and support the State Department of Environmental Protection in focusing on site-specific solutions and new technologies, like deer contraception programs.