

Testimony Concerning SB 445
Barbara Rudnick
Member Connecticut Votes for Animals

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of SB 445, but with the inclusion of a requirement that all new pet shops not sell commercially-bred dogs and a phase-out of the sale of commercially bred dogs in Connecticut's 16 current pet shops.

I am a registered voter in East Berlin, and I have worked in animal welfare/rescue for over 25 years. I have been a volunteer with both the New Britain and Berlin Animal Shelters and am a member of Connecticut Votes for Animals.

I am here to speak with you today because I have owned puppy mill dogs. Both were purchased as gifts for me by a naive husband. The first a Beagle puppy from a pet store in Meriden. She was on sale, her price marked down several times because she had been there for months. When he brought her home and we put her down and she was barely able to walk, a result of being in a cage for so long. My Beagles list of medical problems were numerous Epilepsy, chronic ear infections, congestive heart failure and problems with her back legs to name a few. We also have a Chihuahua purchased again by my husband, who felt he was much smarter so he purchased from an organization here in CT that led him to believe the puppy was born here. Her paperwork says she is long hair, she is not and unfortunately when she too developed Epilepsy and other medical problems I showed my husband that our poor puppy was really born in Mississippi and not here in Connecticut.

We all have seen the pictures of abuse and read the reports of the atrocities that puppy mill dogs endure, yet many of the conditions in puppy mills are considered acceptable under the Animal Welfare Act. The present weak laws do little to save these dogs from the sad lives they live. There is no concern for the well being of the dogs or their puppies, they are simply a way for these breeders to make money. The laws are poorly enforced by the USDA and there are insufficient inspectors to monitor compliance. This is why groups such as CVA are necessary.

The first months of a puppies life are so important for learning good behavior and socialization, yet puppy mill dogs sold to pet stores are locked in cages with no toys or interactions and new owners then wonder why they have such behavioral problems.

Over 100 pet stores in Connecticut do not sell puppies, yet still are in business. Only 16 pet stores still sell commercially bred dogs, most from puppy mills. Other than profit made from the pain, suffering and abuse of these dogs there is no reason for this to continue. There are so many wonderful dogs and puppies abandoned and without homes available in Connecticut and we know partnering with rescues and pet stores works because it is already taking place at many pet shops, both large and small, here in Connecticut. We also know the overwhelming majority of families in Connecticut do not purchase their dogs from pet stores and are more than happy to patronize rescue organizations and responsible breeders.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify and hope that you will strongly support this bill and make Connecticut a leader in animals rights and welfare that we can all be proud of.

Thank you,

Barbara Rudnick
East Berlin, CT

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"The idea that some lives matter less is the root of all that's wrong with this world"