

**RB 445: Testimony of former Task Force member, Dr. Arnold L. Goldman**

**March 14, 2014**

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, Members of the Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee,

As a former member of the pet shop Task Force, I am pleased to offer my support of RB 445. As a veterinarian, optimizing animal welfare is an important element of my profession's service to society. It is refreshing that RB 445 focuses on optimization, rather than elimination, in considering how to improve the health and welfare of puppies imported for sale in Connecticut pet shops.

RB 445 takes a measured, thoughtful approach towards increasing the already high standards for puppies imported for sale by Connecticut pet shops, as well as for the husbandry conditions required of our local breeders. Each of these groups welcomes an approach that seeks to elevate the quality of their activities, such that the public can have the highest confidence in them, and so they can cease being vilified for their work. They both love their work and also want to do the right thing. RB 445 will increase and maintain the highest level of transparency in pet shop operations and improve the oversight of Connecticut pet shops and breeders by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

As a veterinarian and Connecticut resident I also want to point out that our state's pet stores and breeders provide a service to our citizens. Because pet stores must be transparent in their operations, families can obtain significant information about an animal before they take it home, just as they can with local breeders. In that transparency are built in consumer protection policies intended to ensure fairness to pet owners as well as ideal animal welfare. Opaquely run Internet sites and parking lot transfers of animals sight unseen provide no such consumer protections.

In my career I've treated animals from all sources, including shelters, rescue organizations here and elsewhere, local breeders and pet stores. None is necessarily better than another, as each individual source must be assessed on its own merits. Each legitimate source of pets has a place in our society and families should continue to have the right to own the puppy or dog of the breed, age and characteristics they choose, and which best fits their particular circumstances.

Despite the shrill demands of some that you ban pet store sales of puppies, the language of RB 445 avoids the inevitable unintended consequences of such an action. In so doing animal welfare is maintained and the needs of Connecticut citizens are balanced. RB 445 will be good public policy. As a former Task Force member, I applaud your efforts.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Arnold L. Goldman DVM, MPH  
CGA Pet Shop Task Force  
Canton, CT