



Testimony for Raised Bill No. 445

Sen. Meyer, Rep. Gentile, Sen. Maynard, Rep. Albis, Sen. Chapin, Rep. Shaban and other distinguished members of the Environment Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver testimony to your committee. My name is Gordon Willard and I am Executive Director of the Connecticut Humane Society. I am providing testimony in support of HB 445, An Act Concerning Certain Recommendations of the Task Force on the Sale of Cats and Dogs from Inhumane Origins at Connecticut Pet Shops.

The Task Force worked for many months to provide guidance and recommendations for legislation that would address the inhumane and exploitive environments within puppy mill breeding operations. We recognize that the Environment Committee considered the Task Force's recommendations in order to craft HB 445. The Connecticut Humane Society sees HB 445 as a way to provide greater clarity with the opportunity through the Department of Agriculture to craft stronger animal care standards for the care of pets in Connecticut pet shops. When improvements can be made that help to protect animals, we can favorably support those improvements.

In looking back at the ongoing issues of inhumane care and treatment of breeding dogs and puppies in commercial puppy mill operations which supply Connecticut pet shops, the effort to end inhumane treatment has a long history:

In March of 1998, the City of New Haven Board of Aldermen asked the State Legislature to enact legislation that would protect puppies from cruel mistreatment by forbidding pet shops from selling young dogs.

In 2005, bill No. 5010, An Act Prohibiting the Sale of Puppies by Pet Shops was proposed. It became clear after consideration over the proposed legislation that the regulation and inspection program administered by the USDA are woefully inadequate to ensure humane

treatment of those animals in commercial breeding operations and it is clear that the State of Connecticut is limited in its ability to affect changes to the USDA's deficiencies.

This issue will resurface again as it has over the years because the nature of making income from pet shops and the nature of caring people within the State of Connecticut will continue to question those practices. The improvements incorporated into HB445 are welcomed yet the original goal set forth in HB No. 5027 from last session to help end inhuman sources of pets sold in Connecticut pet shops will undoubtedly require additional attention as crafted in this bill.