

## Testimony Concerning S. B. 445

### Ina Blejan

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of S.B. 445 An act concerning certain recommendations of the task force on the sale of cats and dogs from inhumane origins at Connecticut pet shops. I ask you to support language that would:

1. Prohibit the sale of commercially-bred dogs in new pet shops, and
2. Phase-out the sale of commercially-bred-dogs in the 16 Connecticut pet shops that still sell them.

I am a registered voter in Glastonbury and I am here to honor my dog's will to live. My dog is my friend. I am here to let you know her story. I went like any other uninformed person to a local pet store in CT and got my Christmas present: a puppy. She was 4 months old at the time and within days of having her, she was diagnosed with diarrhea due to a parasite. The vet told me she probably drank water from a swamp. Talking to the salesperson from the pet store, I was told that I can give her back to them and be refunded but she would have to be destroyed. Destroyed? Yes, killed. I refused, horrified at the suggestion. I took care of her then as I do to this day. In the last 9 years, and thousands of dollars later, the array of diagnosis she went through is amazing: numerous ear infections, infected paws, diarrhea, vomiting, allergies, anxiety, kidney failure, which she survived, urinary tract infections and one surgery. She went through numerous courses of antibiotics and doctor's visits. I looked at the beautifully framed paper that is called her pedigree that shows fancy names as her parents and ancestors. The breeder listed cannot be found through the store or internet. But, there is a name of a corporation on her certificate, located in another state.

One of my friends lost her dog when he was only 4 years old due to bleeding. Doctors could not diagnose the reason and despite numerous treatments he died. My friend decided to adopt later a dog from a shelter and she actually told me she went through rigorous checking done by the shelter. The shelter was more concerned with the welfare of the puppy than anything else. That impressed her so much that now she told me and others, there is no other way for us but to adopt from rescue shelters. She would never go back to a pet store.

These unfortunate situations are possible because the Animal Welfare Act of 2009 does not go far enough in protecting the life of dogs in puppy mills. While I do understand how hard the USDA workers work, I can assure you than we can help them by supporting phasing out the sale of dogs from puppy mills in our state.

We paid \$730,000 in 2012 to reduce the pet overpopulation problem. We euthanized in CT municipal shelters 2,700 cats and dogs in 2012.

The 16 store that still sell pets from puppy mills will have 5 years to adjust and rethink the model of their business...just like any other industry has to adjust when change is necessary. This is not about killing jobs; this is about saving lives and our state's economy.

Now, as an informed constituent, am letting you know that there is an overflow of commercially –bred puppies in our state. Please support the ban of their sale in our state. There are already cities in US and Canada, among them San Diego, Los Angeles, Chicago that already have ordinances in place to ban the sale of dogs from puppy mills. Let Connecticut be the first state to do this as a state law. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Ina Blejan

Glastonbury, CT.