

February 27, 2026

Testimony of Joshua Levin, Legislative & Advocacy Manager

In SUPPORT of HB 5283 – An Act Authorizing Municipalities to Prohibit the Sale of Dogs, Cats and Rabbits in Pet Shops

Distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee,

HB 5283 provides necessary clarification regarding the authority of municipalities to prohibit the sale of animals within their jurisdictions. **I urge you to support this bill to authorize local officials to address public health and animal welfare.**

Late last year, the Stamford Board of Representatives passed Ordinance 35-1-1 to prohibit the sale of certain animals in pet stores. Despite overwhelming support, the mayor ultimately vetoed the ordinance due to conflicting legal opinions regarding whether Connecticut municipalities have the authority to prohibit such sales. **Uncertainty about municipal authority should not prevent communities from enacting commonsense reforms. Clear statutory language allows municipalities to act with confidence and govern effectively.**

Stamford passed legislation prohibiting the sale of animals in pet stores because it is a known fact that the vast majority of these animals come from puppy mills – industrial facilities that prioritize profit over the wellbeing of the animals.¹ Puppy mills subject animals to inhumane treatment ranging from a lack of veterinary care to crowded and unsanitary living conditions.² Living in such conditions causes lifelong health and behavioral issues for the animal and thousands of dollars in veterinary bills for the family. Connecticut must denounce this practice by authorizing municipalities to prohibit the sale of animals in pet shops.

The United States is currently facing an overpopulation crisis. According to Humane World for Animals, it is estimated that puppy mills sell roughly 2.6 million puppies each year, not considering annual kitten and rabbit sales.³ Further estimates find that 1.5 million dogs and cats are euthanized by shelters every year.⁴ By not addressing the puppy mill to pet store pipeline through meaningful legislation, the overpopulation crisis will only continue to worsen.

What happened in Stamford late last year demonstrates exactly why this bill is needed. HB 5283 clarifies that municipalities have the authority to regulate the sale of animals within their communities. While a statewide ban on the sale of animals in pet stores is the preferred solution, **this bill is an important and meaningful step toward ending the puppy mill to pet store pipeline in Connecticut.** I strongly urge the Planning and Development Committee to act favorable on HB 5283.

Your time and consideration on this matter is greatly appreciated.

¹ Connecticut for Animals Education Fund 501(c)(3). (2024). Puppy mills. https://www.ctforanimals.org/files/ugd/8504f7_a785bc949df641c3a96ffe74bfa02f98.pdf

² Humane World for Animals. (2024). Undercover investigation: holiday shoppers urged to avoid supporting cruel puppy mills. <https://www.humaneworld.org/en/news/undercover-investigation-holiday-shoppers-urged-avoid-supporting-cruel-puppy-mills>

³ Humane World for Animals. (2025). Puppy mills: facts and figures. https://www.humaneworld.org/sites/default/files/docs/HSUS_puppy-mill-facts-figures.pdf

⁴ ASPCA. (2024). U.S. animal shelter statistics. <https://dev-cloudflare.aspc.org/helping-shelters-people-pets/us-animal-shelter-statistics>