

## Testimony to Puppy Mill Task Force

DESPITE WHAT'S BEEN PRINTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS, WE'RE NOT HERE TO PUT LOCAL PET SHOPS OUT OF BUSINESS -- WE ARE TRYING TO STOP THE INHUMANE PRACTICES AT THE PUPPY MILLS THEY ORDER THEIR PUPPIES FROM -- WHERE MANY OF THESE PRACTICES ARE ACTUALLY LEGAL UNDER FEDERAL LAW.

WE'RE HERE BECAUSE WE'VE SEEN THE CONDITIONS BREEDING DOGS ARE KEPT IN AT THESE FACILITIES . GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN WE HAD TO RELY ON BLURRY UNDERCOVER PICTURES. NOW WE HAVE THOUSANDS OF PHOTOS TAKEN BY USDA INSPECTORS -- AND WE CAN TRACE THEM RIGHT TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD PUPPY STORES.

I HOPE THAT BY NOW YOU'VE ALL SEEN THE PHOTOS OF DOGS WHOSE FEET ARE DEFORMED FROM STANDING ON WIRE FLOORING THEIR ENTIRE LIVES; DOGS WHO ARE LIVING WITH PAINFUL MATTED COATS, DOGS WHO HAVE NOT RECEIVED PROPER MEDICAL CARE -- NOT TO MENTION THE PHOTOS OF ENDLESS PILES OF FECES. IF THESE PHOTOS WERE ATTACHED TO THE CAGES OF THE PUPPIES FOR SALE -- HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD WANT TO SUPPORT THIS INDUSTRY?

I THINK THAT PEOPLE STILL IMAGINE THAT THE PUPPIES ARE ALL BORN IN SOMEONE'S KITCHEN AND LOVINGLY CARED FOR BY THEIR FAMILIES UNTIL THEY ARE DELIVERED BY THE 'PUPPY STORK' TO THE STORE. THAT THEY ROMP AND PLAY ON A GRASSY HILLSIDE...

I'VE FOUND THAT PEOPLE WHO PURCHASE PUPPIES FROM PET STORES TEND TO FALL INTO ONE OF TWO CATEGORIES. THE FIRST GROUP THINK THEY ARE 'SAVING' THE PUPPY BY FREEING IT FROM THE STORE. OF COURSE, THAT PUPPY WILL BE REPLACED BY ANOTHER ONE.

THE SECOND GROUP OF CONSUMERS BELIEVE THE STORE EMPLOYEES WHO TELL THEM THE PUPPIES AREN'T FROM PUPPY

**MILLS. THEY HAVE THEIR HEARTS SET ON THE CUTE PUPPY THEY'RE PLAYING WITH, AND THEY ASSUME THAT CERTAIN STANDARDS OF CARE ARE BEING ENFORCED. THEY BELIEVE THAT WHEN THEY WALK INTO A BRIGHT, SHINY STORE WITH SMILING EMPLOYEES THAT THEY ARE DEALING WITH A HUMANE BUSINESS -- ONE THAT CARES ABOUT IT'S PRODUCT AND IT'S CLIENTS.**

**BUT THIS TYPE OF BUSINESS OWNER WOULDN'T ORDER THEIR 'STOCK' FROM PUPPY MILLS -- WITH OR WITHOUT VIOLATIONS. AND REPUTABLE BREEDERS DONT SELL TO PET STORES.**

**BUT WE HAVE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO ACTUALLY MAKE THIS BUSINESS HUMANE. BY REQUIRING STORES TO SOURCE THEIR PETS FROM RESCUES AND SHELTERS WE CAN CUT OUT THE PUPPY MILLS AND THE MISERY AND STILL PROVIDE PETS TO THOSE WHO WANT THEM -- AND A WORKABLE BUSINESS MODEL FOR THE STORE OWNERS.**

**THANK YOU.**

Kerri Ann Hofer  
Cos Cob

