

Kess, Quinn

From: Aubrey Ross [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 24, 2013 11:36 AM
To: CTPS
Subject: Testimony for upcoming Task Force on Pet Shops hearing December 4, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to testify for the Task Force on Pet Shops hearing taking place on December 4, 2013. I am appalled that pet shops in the state of Connecticut are still allowed to sell puppies that come from so-called breeders but in reality are the product of puppy mills across the country. All this is doing is enabling puppy mills to continue to function by providing income from the sales of their puppies. They do not care about the health or fate of their dogs; they do not perform temperament tests or health tests on prospective breeding stock, nor do they often know the health histories of the dogs' lineages. Any responsible breeder would do all of the above to ensure they produce only the best examples of the breed and healthiest puppies possible. Any responsible breeder or pet adoption agency would also screen all potential buyers/adopters to make sure puppies are placed according to how they mesh with the families. Puppy mills and consequently pet stores selling puppies do not do any of this and it leads to the continued breeding of unhealthy puppies with a high likelihood of poor temperament.

I previously worked at a local veterinary hospital as a receptionist and in my time there, I saw firsthand some of the horrors of puppy mills. Clients would come in with new puppies which they purchased from pet stores and more often than not, those puppies would be unhealthy. Their illnesses would run the gambit from kennel cough to pneumonia, loose stools to Giardia, as well as congenital issues such as hip dysplasia and entropion. Unsuspecting clients who had paid hundreds to thousands of dollars for their new puppies were suddenly faced with having to pay even more money to treat whatever ailments their new pet had, all as a result of indiscriminate practices by both puppy mills and the pet stores who sold those puppies.

Additionally, I recently experienced the sudden and devastating loss of my own puppy mill dog and I believe her health issues (epilepsy and a suspected brain tumor) were largely the result of the lack of health screening and care of her sire and dam before she was even conceived. My pug came from an Ohio puppy mill which was one of the largest in the state raided by the Ohio Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. When I purchased her, I knew very little about puppy mills and the people who bred her hid their large scale puppy operation very well so that any everyday person would not realize what they were actually doing. They passed previous USDA and AKC inspections and were only caught after several complaints finally prompted the launch of a 6 month long investigation. It was discovered that they had over 240 dogs at the time of their arrest, all of which were kept in rusty metal crates stacked to the ceiling of a large warehouse building. If they could fool the USDA and AKC inspectors for years, that should show that other puppy mills could very well hide their operations as well.

Every time a pet store sells a puppy that came from a puppy mill, it only helps the cycle continue. The revenue from the puppy sale goes back to the puppy mill and the puppy mill continues to produce unhealthy, unstable dogs kept in deplorable conditions. Why should pet stores sell such puppies when animal shelters across the state are full of adoptable puppies and dogs? By producing and selling unhealthy puppies, all these pet stores are doing is to contribute to a growing number of dogs in shelters. If Connecticut pet stores are banned from selling puppies from these breeding operations and instead offer puppies from shelters and rescue organizations, the number of shelter dogs will drastically be reduced as will the number of unhealthy puppies sold to consumers. Only when the cycle is broken will the cruelty end. Please consider the consequences if pet stores are allowed to continue selling puppies and put a stop to it today.

Thank you,
Aubrey Ross