

TESTIMONY OF CYNTHIA PIERCE TO THE CT PUPPY TASK FORCE,  
HARTFORD, CT DECEMBER 4, 2013

I'm Cynthia Pierce from Washington CT. As a consumer who has purchased puppies from pet stores I'm strongly against the proposed ban.

I could go on at length about the inequity of going after the already heavily regulated stores responsible for just 6 percent of dogs acquired in CT while barely regulating the sources of the other 94%.

I've chosen, instead, to use my time to read a statement from a New Jersey puppy store that has pursued the very direction this committee is considering.

It's from the owner of Shake a Paw and dated yesterday.

"I'm Jeff Morton, I added a "Rescue and Adoption Center" to my store as a separate Non-Profit Corporation. I've become a State Certified Animal Control Officer. My store is licensed as both Pet Store and Animal Shelter.

My pet store still sells puppies, and that's the only way that my business can survive.

But No local animal shelter will work with me to source dogs for my rescue business. In fact, they hate me even more now because I'm in THEIR business with resources to do "Rescue" on a larger scale--- with a building, employees, veterinary staff, insurance, etc.

I'm a bigger threat to them since I'm infringing on their business. Pet Stores and Shelters compete for the consumer looking for a dog. While shelters and rescues get dogs dropped off at no cost, these tend to be the most adoptable and are never offered to me.

To be in the non-profit shelter business, I need dogs.

I've bought some kennel leftovers including grade 3 patella's, grade 2 heart murmurs and ugly 18 week old mixes no one else wants. But I'm BUYING these dogs for my non-profit. These animals are of a far lesser quality than we normally purchase, but they receive the same care as my regular pups.

I get surrenders from the public, but only one or two per month.

My rescues are sold at a loss for \$399 without any warranties.

I have 25 cages dedicated to this business, but as of today, they are all empty.

In order to fill them, I need rescue and adoption dogs. Shelters will not share adoptable dogs with us, why would they?? They need dogs just like we do.

Both For-Profit and Non-Profit businesses need dogs. Both businesses buy dogs to sell. And most rescues are increasing the numbers of dogs they buy.

It's ironic that a puppy from a commercial breeder makes a good story for a non-profit, but the same exact puppy is frowned upon in a pet store. It makes no sense.

I was amazed to read that Connecticut imported over 14,000 "rescue" dogs last year with minimal regulation and oversight.

Since businesses and rescues buy and sell dogs coming into the State, all laws and regulations should apply to both.

If a pet store can't buy from a breeder in North Carolina, then why can the rescue? If the pet store is required to comply with various laws, why shouldn't the rescue?

Both shelters and stores are businesses, both buy and sell dogs, and fairly enforcing the laws that are already on the books will do far more to protect consumers than the ban being proposed."

Thank you for your time and I'd be happy to respond to any questions.

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Oxford Puppy Group, Inc.

Shake A Paw Rescue and Adoption Center, Inc. A New Jersey Non-Profit Corp

Note To Task Force Members:

The statement presented above has been revised from the electronic testimony submitted by Mr. Morton, with his full participation and consent so as to fit within the three minute time limit and to better cover a number of issues that are likely to be raised by Task Force members.