

Testimony of Edmond Foucault, All Pet's Club

My name is Edmond Foucault. I co-own and operate four pet stores in Connecticut called "All Pet's Club." I have been in this business for 24 years.

Today's topic: Should puppies and cats be banned for sale in pet stores.

My answer to the question is no.

It is not easy to be a small business in Connecticut. Taxes, Energy, Rent, Workers Compensation and Health Insurance costs are very high, among the highest in the nation. Competition is a constant challenge with internet sales and big box stores. Regulations are extensive and are expensive to comply with.

We have, at any given moment, 95 to 100 employees—both full and part-time. Their ages run from 16 to 73 years old. They quickly learn that we have very strict and high standards doing business. We are a very structured company, we strive for excellence with all of our employees and we don't settle for less. They also learn that animal welfare is our number one goal; this has always been our personal and business concern. This is the reason we employ so many people and we are very proud of our staff. If puppies and cats were banned, easily 30 of these jobs would be eliminated immediately.

Our customers are located all over the state and include those out of state as far as Florida. These customers deserve to have the right to choose how and where they want to obtain their next pet. Their continued support keeps me fighting the ban that has been proposed. In the month of October we had over 1700 puppy-visits by Individuals and families company-wide. Out of that number we sold a puppy about 8% of those visits. This proves that consumers do not impulsively buy their puppies. It also shows that customers rely on us not just for a healthy puppy, but more importantly, for the education and hands-on experience to help them decide what breed will be the best fit for their family and circumstances no matter where they obtain their pets. Seeing so many breeds and so many purebreds under one roof would no longer be available.

We pride ourselves in the types of puppies we offer. Our customers want pure-bred dogs. We provide those to them and offer proof with papers. We deal directly with the breeders who are all USDA licensed and who follow and exceed the guidelines of the law just as we do. And as always we continue to improve! On my visits to our breeders I have seen firsthand the opposite of the horrific conditions described by activists. These dedicated, caring families spend many hours everyday taking care of their animals. These dogs are not suffering, starving or cramped up in dishwasher-size cages. Their pens are clean and their tails wagging. Don't get me wrong, these bad conditions that activists speak about do exist in substandard kennels and need to be stopped. But what also should stop is painting all breeders with the same brush.

The proposed business model activist suggests will not work for us. We could not afford to purchase our animals through local shelters and rescues, maintain the pet shop laws, our daily expenses and sell them at competitive prices. If this business model worked it would be used by many pet shops in Connecticut now. Our Customers want puppies, not older dogs who may have problems; Our customers want pure-breds, Our customers want selection. People will go to get these puppies in pet stores in all the states surrounding CT, depriving the state of tax revenue – or worse, buy them from unregulated sources.

Thank you