

## Kess, Quinn

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**From:** Erin Lionetti [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 02, 2013 12:41 PM  
**To:** CTPS  
**Subject:** Humane Pet Shop Legislation

I am writing because I feel so very strongly about the humane pet shop legislation. As I'm sure you know, the intent is to require pet shops to source their puppies and kittens only from rescues, and private or municipal shelters - not commercial breeders. (Local, responsible breeders will not be impacted and CT residents would still be able to purchase directly from a breeder.) The shelters in our area are consistently overflowing with animals in need of forever homes, and these pet shops keep popping up in our area selling tons of new puppies and kittens from all over the country, many from the midwest. They are selling them at extremely high prices, and many of these animals were bred and raised in deplorable, completely inhumane conditions. The Midwest is full of puppy mills.

Many of these animals have health issues when purchased from these types of stores. I have to admit, I am against these stores, but years ago as a young adult I purchased a puppy from one of these stores, Puppy Love in Danbury, CT. I knew nothing about where these puppies came from, or the awful conditions they are raised in. Many people are unaware of this, and if they knew how these puppies came to be, would not be supporting and shopping at these businesses. I know that if I had known, there would be absolutely no way I would have let my money help these horrible, inhumane puppy mill owners prosper! He was so cute and helpless, and was wedged in a tiny cage with 3 other puppies. All of the puppies were crawling all over each other to get their paws up and off from the feces and the wet paper that lined their cage. It was heartbreaking. If I had \$5,000 I would've bought all of them to 'save' them. My poor puppy was covered in feces, it was matted in his fur and around his eyes. It was absolutely disgusting. He went for his first vet visit a few days later and he had Kennel Cough. Kennel cough is often spread in enclosed areas with poor air circulation—while boarding in a kennel or an animal shelter. He was placed on antibiotics and was eventually healthy again. Although this is a common issue, it should be one that is addressed by these stores and the 'breeders' who sell these pups. It can be prevented. My dog is now 7 years old and so far healthy. I am reminded by the vet with each visit that I am vet lucky that my dog hasn't had any other serious issues yet, because he was bred in a puppy mill in Kansas, and many dogs that come from these places have lots of congenital issues.

A client of mine bought a shih tzu puppy from Puppy Love 2 years ago. She is a mother of 6 children, and they were so excited to have their new friend! She was not aware of the conditions of puppy mills, or the existence of puppy mills. (She now says had she known, she never would have let her money supported this unethical practice.) They had the puppy for 8 months, kept up on his vet visits and vaccinations, and loved him like a family member. One day he was resting and watching a movie with the children, all of a sudden he stood up, yelped in pain, and dropped to the floor! The dog was unconscious and not breathing. The family rushed him to the emergency vet, but he was already gone. According to the vet, the puppy had a congenital heart issue. Something that would never be seen in a normal vet examination. The family was heartbroken. They were responsible, caring pet owners, and they could've never foreseen this occurring. I have heard numerous stories from people in this area that are very similar. Thankfully I haven't had to deal with it myself. The puppy store in the Danbury Fair Mall is no longer there, and I don't know why, but I am very glad it's gone. I know way too many people who purchased animals from there they had lots of serious issues, or even died within the first year they had them. If this is occurring this often, then there is no way that these animals are being bred and cared for responsibly before being sent to these puppy shops. From what I understand, reputable breeders generally do not supply pet shops with their puppies. Just because a pet shop claims an animal comes from a "local home raised breeder" does not ensure that the dog is coming from ideal, non-puppy mill conditions.

I've also witnessed first hand a poor, battered mother from a puppy mill. I was volunteering with a rescue and looking for a foster family for this sad dog. She was an 11 years old shih tzu, and had numerous litters of puppies over the years. She was completely malnourished, and terrified of people because of her lack of any love or attention, and locked in a small cage 24/7. Her vagina required medication to be applied a few times daily. It was protruding because of the tremendous amount of babies she delivered over the years. She was also blind in one eye and her mammary glands

were stretched, torn, and bleeding-they practically dragged on the floor. She was obviously mistreated and brutally forced to breed for profit. Her body had taken a horrible toll and she simply needed a home to stay warm and spend her last few months in comfortably. It was absolutely heartbreaking to see.

With the shelters being as full as they are, why not make these animals more readily available to the public? If you take a moment to visit the website [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com) and search our area I'm sure you will be shocked and saddened by the amount of homeless animals listed. Adoption is always the best first option. But those who can't find what they're looking for in shelters or breed-specific rescues will still be welcome to work directly with a breeder and verify conditions themselves with this new legislation.

There are about 130 pet shops in CT, and only 15 sell puppies! This means, 115 pet stores have built a strong business without selling commercially-bred puppies. There is no reason to believe the 15 puppy stores cannot also build a humane business. The adopt, don't shop slogan is catching on and gaining momentum I can say for sure that the overwhelming majority of the population intend to go to a pound, a rescue, or a local reputable breeder. If pet shops sell only rescued animals, they align themselves more closely with customer values.

Thank you for your time. This NEEDS to be changed, there are so many wonderful animals waiting for homes, why must we purposely and inhumanely continue to grow the population?

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