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Subject: CT Pet Shop Legislation

Date: Tue, Nov 19, 2013 7:27 am

Good Morning to All of You: My name is Liz Bennett and I am the President and Founder of Bandit's Place Animal Rescue here in CT. I am writing to ask all of you to support the ban on the sale of puppy mill dogs / pets in pet stores in CT.

As a former animal control officer for the Town of Granby I have had the displeasure of investigating a local puppy mill but more than that I have had numerous incidents involving dogs from puppy stores, mostly involving bites and something called "Sudden Rage Syndrome".

"SRS" is a psychological condition that comes about when pets are over-bred, as in the puppy mill situation. At about 2 years of age the dog starts to display incidents of sudden rage wherein the dog will attack and literally attempt to maul, usually the closest person to it. Then as quickly as it starts, it's over and the dog goes back to being the happy, friendly little booger that it was prior to the attack. The owner will often dismiss it as being triggered by something they did (the owner). However after a few episodes of this, usually the animal control officer or rescue is called and the owner wants to surrender this pet. One of the worst cases I saw was that of a Jack Russell Terrier attacking his owner in Simsbury. I was called in as their animal control officer was not available. I was met by several police officers after the woman, who had suffered some pretty bad facial injuries, was taken by ambulance to the hospital. I opened the basement door where the dog had been corralled and found a very friendly little dog, wagging it's tail.

Now, as you and I both know, people lie. And when they go to turn these dogs into either the animal control officer or more likely the local animal shelter they usually do NOT tell the authorities that the dog has done this, and thus the dog's new owners never know until this dog attacks again. That's the usual cycle here.

As an animal rescuer, I can't even begin to count the number of emails I've received about a "puppy mill shut-down" and "rescues needed for these poor babies".... I can say, without hesitation, that I absolutely refuse to help in these situations which would normally make no sense in the rescue world. However, having had experience with these dogs, I can honestly say that I'd rather see them all euthanized rather than place them out into the unsuspecting pet world. They have suffered enough. Usually, though, I am pretty much standing alone in my opinion in the rescue world (and probably shunned in those circles!) however I'm not about to waiver on my opinion. I know rescue people who say these dogs can be socialized and turned into loving, wonderful pets however I feel that the incidence of "SRS" is too great to take a chance on having someone mauled.

The animal rescue / activist world is buzzing about getting legislation passed that would allow only animals from rescues to be sold at pet stores and while I applaud the movement I do feel it's got good and bad sides. Obviously the good is that puppy mills will be going out of business (ok stop laughing - we both know it's not going to happen because there will always be puppy mills) or at least slowed down. It will be a way to get information out about these mills and about backyard breeding being socially UN-acceptable and it will obviously raise awareness about animal care. On the flip side, though, I do have issue in that these stores would be selling animals without having adopters go through the application process. Let's face it - If I see a pet in the store that's available, I'm less likely to wait out an adoption process if I can go somewhere else and get it right then and there. SO to the pet store owner, the answer is obviously to just sell the pet without any kind of background check, just like it's done now. Better for business. Not necessarily better for the pet.

So long and short of it - I whole heartedly approve and support the ban on puppy mill pets being sold in stores!!! I urge you to support it as well. However I do feel that there is much more work to be done on what to do after this ban is put into place and I'd be happy to join any board as a rescue representative with a level head!

Thank you for reading my long winded (or, rather, typed) ramblings on this subject. I've known Ray Connors for many years and he can attest to my passion for animals and my willingness to address this issue. I've been a huge advocate of banning pet store sales for many years and I'm thrilled that the matter is being addressed at this point!

My best wishes to all of you in this matter. Again, please let me know if I can help in any way!

Sincerely,

Liz Bennett, President.
Bandit's Place, Inc., Animal Rescue

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