

November 3, 2013

Testimony for Task Force Concerning the Sale of Cats and Dogs at CT Pet Shops from Inhumane Origins held on November 13, 2013

Members of the Task Force:

My name is Ned Polan. I am the New England Representative for HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response, the first nationally accredited canine crisis response organization in the country.

During my life I have had seven dogs. All nominally purebred: Two from pet stores with unavailable breed history; Three AKC registered dogs from breed-to-show breeders who were used as breed stock, ended up unwanted and came to me through the rescue organization Another Chance for English Setters; And two AKC registered dogs, whose parents and lineage I know personally, from Dr. Jennifer Kelsey a small, reputable, occasional breeder in Connecticut, who is also hoping to testify today.

Of these seven dogs, only the two Kelsey dogs were healthy, well-socialized with humans and other animals, exhibited no bizarre behavioral problems, and were capable of training. Of the other dogs, the pet store dogs died young. The three rescued show dogs did not make the grade in the puppy ring and spent their early lives as penned breed stock, then were sold as pets and eventually ended up in rescue, having never been properly socialized as puppies for family life. All three had lifelong major health problems.

Of the two well-socialized Kelsey dogs: I had the first one in the 1980's, the second, Brinkley was born in 2010. Since I have been fortunate to have been able to retire early, Brinkley and I have partnered in a local therapy dog program, visiting a hospital psychiatric unit, a rehabilitation unit, a crisis stabilization/ respite facility, a children's ADHD program, and an adult daycare facility—more than 180 visits/year. None of the dogs with impoverished early life could have achieved even this level of training.

We have also moved on to the much higher level of training for disaster and crisis response. Through HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response ([www.hopeaacr.org](http://www.hopeaacr.org)), Brinkley and I have been rigorously trained to develop resilience to stress, transportation modes, unfamiliar/alarming/offensive sights/sounds/smells/activities, and conditioning to a wide range of intense emotional and behavioral responses. Rigorous training also includes psychological first aid, care of the caregiver, FEMA incident command protocols, Red Cross human and animal first aid and CPR training, and annual continuing education and crisis response drill participation. We have just returned from two weeks at the Washington Navy Yard, providing comfort and encouragement to survivors of the shootings there. We never self-deploy, and in this case were called in by the U.S. Navy. In preparing for this activity I examined pet store dogs and could never find one I thought might remotely be trainable to this level of performance. (in fact, typical therapy dogs and their handlers are not trained for crisis response--a subject of your House Bill No.6465, Public Act No 13-114: An Act Concerning Animal Therapy, about which I would be delighted to speak with any of the members of this Task Force, or staff of the Commissions charged with implementing that law).

In conclusion, given my experience in owning and observing puppies from pet stores, I wholeheartedly support legislation to ban the sale at CT pet shops of animals from inhumane origins.

Thank you for your attention and the privilege to address you on this topic.

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