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January 22, 2014

**Final Recommendation to Connecticut Task Force Concerning the Sale of
Cats and Dogs at CT Pet Shops from Inhumane Origins**

**From: The Humane Society of the United States, Annie Hornish, Connecticut
State Director**

Pursuant to the charge of our task force, per Special Act No. 13-19, which is to "study the proliferation of dogs and cats sourced from inhumane origins and sold in Connecticut pet shops," and that "Such study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of how to amend the general statutes to provide for the reduction of such proliferation" (Source: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/ACT/SA/2013SA-00019-R00HB-05027-SA.htm>), please consider our recommendation:

"That the Connecticut General Statutes be amended to include:

On and after January 1, 2016, no pet shop licensed pursuant to section 22-344 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, shall sell or transfer a dog or cat or allow a dog or cat to be sold, adopted out, or otherwise transferred to the public on the premises of such pet shop unless such dog or cat was obtained from a: (1) Publicly operated animal control facility, or (2) animal shelter or rescue organization that is a tax exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as from time to time amended, whose primary mission and practice is the rescue and placement of abandoned, unwanted, neglected or abused animals. Any person who violates the provisions of this section shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars."

Points to consider:

- "Humane sourcing" allows for increased transparency: In addition to the transparency offered by virtue of being a publically operated shelter or 501(c)(3), Connecticut has strict importation laws that govern rescue groups (PA11-187).
- It is recognized that puppy mills exist outside of Connecticut, not inside of Connecticut. Once puppies arrive in Connecticut, laws are on the books to help both ensure proper care and provide financial remedies for the purchase of sick animals. It is the mothers of these puppies, languishing in

- puppy mills, who are the impetus behind this task force—the “inhumane origins” of which this Task Force’s charge refers.
- While improvements to federal Animal Welfare Act may sound reasonable, the problem is that this approach has proved to be difficult (or impossible) in stopping the proliferation of puppy mills:
 - Enforcement problems: In 2010, the USDA Office of Inspector General conducted an audit of APHIS’s Animal Care (AC) unit, which is the entity responsible for enforcing the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). The OIG identified major deficiencies with administration of the AWA, and found that AC’s enforcement process was ineffective against problematic dealers. Please see: <http://www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/33002-4-SF.pdf>
 - Standards are inadequate: AWA standards are merely survival standards, wholly inadequate to ensure humane conditions (e.g., standards allow cages that provide a mere 6 inches of space between the dog’s nose and the cage wall, standards fail to provide for solid footing, veterinary care, that dogs be regularly let out of cages, and to mandate socialization). Please see “Why the Federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) Standards are Inadequate to Protect Dogs in Puppy Mills”, a document filed last week to the Task Force under “The Humane Society Supplemental Information”.
 - There exist 130 pet shops in Connecticut, and only 16 will be impacted by this legislation. Testament to the fact that the humane business model works are the 114 stores who do not source from puppy mills. Fifty-three pet shops in Connecticut have signed the “puppy friendly pledge”, pledging to not sell puppies in their stores.
 - Connecticut pet stores who sell puppies acquire dogs from puppy mills. Voluminous evidence has been provided to this task force to this point.
 - Responsible breeders do not sell to pet shops. The vast majority of national or “parent” dog breeding clubs include statements in their respective codes of ethics that recommend not selling to pet stores. Please see “Breed Clubs Opposing Pet Store Sales (codes of ethics)”, a document filed last week to the Task Force under “The Humane Society Supplemental Information (2)”.
 - There is no need for any fiscal note to be associated with this proposal. For example, if the Department of Agriculture needs assistance in organizing data generated from health certificates and certificates of origin, a no-cost solution could be had with a partnership with reputable public or private entities.
 - Consumer protection benefit: Research shows that pet store dogs are more prone to behavioral problems. Please see Dr. Frank McMillan’s testimony on 12/4/13, which cites recent studies in *Applied Animal Behavior Science* (2011) and the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* (2013).
 - This law would be a great companion to existing spay/neuter and similar programs the state has already undertaken in an effort to end the euthanasia of healthy pets.
 - This law would not violate interstate commerce laws because 1) it is not discriminatory (it does not favor in-state economic interests while burdening out-of-state economic interests, and 2) it has a legitimate State interest (consumer protection).

Thank you for your time and consideration.