

SPEAKER LIST
Wednesday, April 9, 2014 Board Meeting

1. Paula Fasseas, PAWS Chicago (Spoke)
2. Bob Yarnell Jr., President- American Canine Association, Inc. (ACA) (Spoke)
3. Mike Bober, Vice President Government Affairs, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (Spoke)
4. Brian Winslow, Director of Animal Welfare - Petland, Inc. (Spoke)
5. Skyler Ormsbee, Manager, Pawsitive Solutions (written testimony)
6. Dan Markwalder DVM, Owner – Rep Chicago Veterinary Medicine Assoc/Barrington Square Animal Hospital (Spoke)
7. Molly Marino, Executive Director - Chicago English Bulldog Rescue, Inc. NFP (Spoke)
8. Cari Meyers, Founder and President of The Puppy Mill Project (Spoke)
9. Dan Star, Owner - Petland Hoffman Estates (Spoke)
10. Janet Star, Owner - Petland Hoffman Estates (Spoke)
11. Ryan Hamel, Business Consultant – Petland, Inc. (written testimony)
12. Racchel Hubbert, Employee - Petland (written testimony)
13. Mark Durband, Manager - Petland Hoffman Estates (written testimony)
14. Deana Kegi, Employee – Petland (written testimony)
15. Marija Schahczinski, Employee – Petland (Spoke)
16. Kassandra DiNardo, Employee – Petland (Spoke)
17. Stacy Antonsen, – Employee- Petland (Spoke)
18. Mike Issac, Owner,- Petland Naperville (Spoke)
19. Adam Stachowiak, Owner - Petland Naperville (Spoke)
20. Rachel Cessna, Senior Sales Manager- Petland Naperville (Spoke)
21. Victoria Martin, Kennel Manager - Petland Naperville (Spoke)

22. Jim Maciejewski, - Petland Chicago Ridge (Spoke)
23. Stacey O'Connell. Store Manager - Petland Chicago Ridge (written testimony)
24. Nissa Burch, Fish Department Manager (written testimony)
25. Calela Graham Pet Counselor – Ridge (written testimony)
26. Stacey O'Connell. Store Manager - Petland Chicago Ridge (written testimony)
27. Kerry Vinker. Pet Counselor- Petland Chicago Ridge (written testimony)
28. George Blakemore, Concerned Citizen (Spoke)
29. Geoff Atlas, Noah's Ark (Spoke)
30. Dale Bartlett (Spoke)
31. Kane Pottenger (Spoke)

Hi, my name is Victoria Martin and I am the kennel manager at a Petland Store that sells puppies. I am a single mom and I raise my son Anthony because of the job I have at Petland. I have been the kennel manager at Petland for more than 2 years and I am in charge of the health and safety of the puppies in our store. I work with our licensed vet to make sure that the puppies we are finding homes for are healthy and free from any types of medical issues before they are placed in homes.

When puppies come in to our store they have already started on a vaccination protocol from our breeders. They have started their puppy shots and have been de-wormed. We continue this vaccination protocol once the puppy arrives at the store.

Within 24 hours of puppies arriving at our store they are checked by our licensed veterinarian to make sure all puppies are up to our standards. We go through multiple criteria on our vet check kin sheet to make sure that each puppy is fit to be sold to a family. We check, ears, nails, heart, hips, breed standard appearance, gait, and many other factors for each puppy that arrives at our store.

Once a puppy is cleared to be sold we find it a home in our store. I have 9 employees right now on staff and the only thing they do is care for the health and safety of our pets. Constant kennel cleaning, nail trimming, and ear cleaning is a part of our daily procedures. Along with that we also make sure that our kennels are completely broken down daily. We take the puppies out and disinfect and wash down each kennel, top to bottom, on a daily basis to make sure that they are 100% clean. Baths are given to our dogs on a weekly basis and they get socialized by customers all the time! In fact if anything we have to tell customers that puppies need some rest because they have been out playing too long. Our puppies are well socialized and love getting out to play with customers!

In our store we have an outdoor run where we get to take our puppies outside to play or let customers take our puppies outside to play. We introduce puppies to the current family pet to make sure they are a good match and we have many areas in our store where a new family can bond with a new puppy.

Every day I come to work, I love being at Petland. I can't imagine what I would do if my job was eliminated because we were no longer allowed to sell puppies in our store. My staff and I do a great job at making sure puppies are healthy, and ready to find homes so it is scary to think that someday I might have to tell them they have to find new jobs.

I ask that you, instead of working against the pet stores, work with them to develop an ordinance that will keep our jobs and our ability to match pets with families. We care so much about our pets, we are not a giant corporate pet store chain, we are a family owned and operated business and we don't want to lose our family.

Hello, My name is Skyler Ormsbee and I run a company called Pawsitive Solutions which handles customer service for pet stores throughout the country. The reason I am here today is that pet stores are the only highly regulated form of purchasing a pet and we should not be limiting their ability to sell pets. Please delay a vote on this ordinance and work with the pet storeowners to draft more strict regulations to force out the bad stores and bad breeders and push this industry to the next level of service.

I would like to share with you what my pet store clients do to make sure the experience for the customer is the best it can possibly be. My team of 5 goes to work the day after a customer takes home a pet from a pet store. We have come up with a program to walk the customer through a number of different processes to make sure that their pet is well cared for, they are getting all the vet care they need, and we are helping them through any training issues they may have.

The day after a puppy goes home we call every single customer to make sure that their experience at the store went well and the puppy had a good first night in its new home. We remind the customer of everything they need to do over the next couple of weeks and months for their new puppy.

The pet store owners are so concerned about the health and safety of the pets they send home with customers that they pay our company to do this. They are investing not only in the pet, when it is sold to the customer, but the long-term care of the pet after it leaves.

If the customer has any questions or concerns about their pet they can call us at any time to discuss their pet's needs and we are always able to help them come to a solution. We follow-up with customers in a timely manner and work to remind them to take advantage of their discounted spay/neuter before their dog is of the required age.

Sometimes pet stores are portrayed to not care about the customer, get them in, get them out, and hopefully never talk to them again. I am here to tell you that this industry is far different from how it may be portrayed. In most cases pet store owners, from my personal experience, go over and beyond what they are "required" to do by law to make things right with a customer concern. I have had owners go to people's houses to help them train their dog, meet the customer at the vet to talk about a concern they may have, or even pay for a carpet shampoo when the animal had an accident. The pet store owners are some of the most driven individuals with always improving the industry and the key to doing so. With their support we can redefine and improve every aspect of the pet buying experience. We can do this not only for the pets, but for the customer and store owner alike.

Not everyone wants a rescue pet, and the stores I work with realize that. The stores I work with would not operate by purchasing puppies or kittens from substandard breeders; they would go out of business. It would not make financial sense to purchase an unhealthy pet for resale or to work with an inhumane breeding facility. Please delay a vote on this ordinance and work with the pet storeowners to draft more strict regulations to force out the bad stores and bad breeders and push this industry to the next level of service.

Thank You

Hi, my name is Rachel Cessna and I have been an employee of a Petland store, that sells puppies, for over 3 years. As a mother of two little girls, I know how important it is to have a family pet. I, myself, have a puppy from Petland that I love. His name is Bowser and he is an English Bulldog. I can't imagine our family without him, and a lot of our customers feel the same way about their pets.

Petland's mission is to match the right pet with the right customer and meet the needs of both the pet and the customer. We are the only place where a customer can come to see multiple purebred puppies and interact with them at time. In our store right now we have over 50 puppies for customers to choose from so that we can find the perfect pet to fit their family.

If this ordinance is passed in Cook County, or eventually in the state of Illinois, it would not only force me to be unemployed, but my staff would lose their jobs as well. I have 8 sales staff members that report to me directly, that I motivate and train on a daily basis. 9 people including myself, that are love their jobs as pet counselors, helping families to find the right pet, whether that is a puppy or a kitten.

Not only do we match the right pet with the right customer, but we also serve a purpose in our community. We have sponsored a Make-A-Wish donation for Breanna, because all she wanted was a puppy that she could play with and care for during the last days of her life. We work with our local high school's work program for special needs kids. They come in and wash puppies and help out around the store 3 times a week so they can get experience of what it is like to have a job, and eventually be working, productive members of our community. Over the Christmas holiday we raised over \$6000 toward cancer treatment for Melissa who is currently battling for her life. We care about the families that we help and the employees that we have. We are a family ourselves.

Could you imagine a world without pet stores? The "puppy in the window" has been a staple in the United States for decades. Families should have the ability to choose where they get their pet from and what type of pet they want. Over the past years, on multiple occasions, I have had families come in who were just at a shelter and could not find a dog to fit their family's needs. Shelter pets don't always make the best pets for every person, and that is how we fill a small niche in our community. We can find the right pet for that family that cannot find the right pet at a shelter. If we were not around where would that family get a pet from? Online?

Could you imagine purchasing a new family member over the internet that you have never seen, never come in contact with, and from a person that you have never met? Our customers know us, and our store has been in business for over 20 years. Why wouldn't you want to take home a pet from us... we are a brick and mortar retail store. We are love animals, we care about our customers and we are passionate about our jobs. We are not going anywhere.

In today's economy we should not be looking to put business owners out of business, employees out of jobs, and limit a consumers's choice of where to buy a pet or what kind of pet to purchase. Please work with the pet store owners and come to a solution to regulate the sale of puppies, so that we don't simply eliminate a business that provides so much love and joy to our community.

Thank you

#4

Cook County Testimony 4/9/2014

Hello, my name is Brian Winslow, I am the Director of Animal Welfare Education at Petland. As part of my role with the company, I have traveled extensively visiting professional breeders throughout the United States and internationally. I have visited hundreds of breeders and attended numerous breeder educational conferences. I have also been an active participant in countless meetings and gatherings working on and discussing best practice breeder standards.

In my extensive travels, I have found that, like in all professions, there are some bad breeders. However, lumping all breeders that supply pet stores as bad is stereotypical, judgmental and wrong. This unfair representation of the breeder community is not fact-based and it is without scientific merit. Rather, it is an emotional reaction that creates an emotional response, thus ignoring reality. I have spent countless hours and days in quality breeder homes and facilities. They love their dogs and puppies. It is a 24/7/365 lifestyle that I respect because of their devotion to their dogs. The vast majority of breeders maintain facilities that exceed the USDA Animal Welfare Act standard, but unfortunately these breeders are never given credit. It seems these days that only negative news "sells". Those opposed to professional breeders highlight the past misdeeds of the extreme minority of breeders to tarnish all breeders.

Both the HSUS and the ASPCA have been vocal advocates of closing what has been termed the "internet loophole". Taken from HSUS's website "breeders who sell puppies for resale to brokers or pet stores are required to be federally licensed and inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). But a gaping loophole in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulations has allowed commercial breeders who sell puppies online, by mail or over the phone to evade oversight. "

When the USDA announced changes to the internet rule, the HSUS stated on their website; "Tens of thousands of dogs suffering in substandard, filthy, and overcrowded cages for years on end will finally get the protection they deserve as a result of a rule the U.S. Department of Agriculture will formally adopt today. This change... will extend federal oversight to thousands of puppy mills that do business online."

They go on to say "Because large-scale dog breeders who sell animals to pet stores (as low as 2% of all dogs sold, according to ASPCA) are regulated, but breeders who sell directly to the public are not, there has been a massive migration of breeders to the latter sales strategy within the last decade or so. If they could sell dogs and escape any federal oversight, why not get in on that act and continue to cut corners on animal care?" Basically, the HSUS has pushed for all breeders to live up to the standards of breeders that are inspected and sold to pet stores, and when the rule change was announced, they were overjoyed. These sentiments are reinforced within the USDA. The majority of complaints received by the USDA from customers and citizens are not directed to those breeders that are licensed and selling to pet stores, instead those complaints are against unregulated breeders and animal hoarders.

There is more oversight of breeders who sell their puppies to pet stores than any other type of breeder, shelter or rescue. Inspection reports for federally licensed breeders are available free of charge on the USDA website. I believe that is the type of transparency that all breeders should welcome.. If a consumer chooses not to buy a puppy from a Cook County pet store, that is certainly their choice and right. But they should also have the right to purchase from a pet store, assuming that the retailer is following all state regulations and acquiring their pets from properly licensed and inspected kennels.

In addition to federal oversight, ALL the Midwest states have state legislation as well, some are similar to USDA regulations, but most exceed USDA regulations. (Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois and Nebraska). This provides two separate set of eyes inspecting kennels.

Illinois is among the states with the most regulated pet stores already. Please consider all the unintended consequences of eliminating a consumer's choice of procuring a pet from a highly regulated industry. In addition to harming Cook County employment, tax revenue, and individual freedom of choice, you are further widening the doors for unregulated players to enter the marketplace if you enact a pet store sales ban. The reality is that consumers want pets, the additional reality is that consumers don't always want an older shelter pet.

Who will fill that void for something that Americans demand?

Thank You.

Good afternoon. I'm Molly Marino, the founder of Chicago English Bulldog Rescue based in Cook County. We have rescued over 700 pure breed English bulldogs with 167 of those coming directly from puppy mills -- Many of the same mills that supply Cook county pet stores--Petland and Happiness is Pets being the most pervasive. I'd like to share what I've learned.

Last year we were on site at the Iowa mill of Debra Pratt. The stench of ammonia and urine was so strong when you drove onto the property that rescuers were vomiting, their eyes were watering and their skin broke out into hives. And this was the open air smell. You can only imagine the smell inside the actual barns. And this was a licensed facility! Clearly it wasn't the "loving home of a breeder" that most people assume is where their pet store puppy is coming from. This mill had hundreds of dogs on the property.

They had lived this way with little to no medical care for years. I provided foster care for one of these dogs who was missing half of her upper jaw from a prior injury. Yes, she was missing her lip and upper teeth, but she was still deemed to be quality breeding stock and continued to have litters.

Just several weeks ago I adopted out a mill mom. She delivered 3 puppies while in my care. She has been so overbred that when our vet performed the C-section to deliver the pups, her uterus was so thin it was about to rupture. If she were not in our care, she and the pups would certainly have died during this delivery.

What's more horrific is that she just delivered a litter of 5 pups back in July of last year. So she got a 4 month "rest" before they put her through another pregnancy again. She is 4.5 years old and has likely already had 7 litters of pups.

I would also like to share some of the more common medical issues that we see in mill dogs.

Most prominent is heart disease. I'd say that about 1/3 of the mill dogs we rescued have significant heart issues. This not only severely shortens their lifespan, but it also is passed on to many of their offspring sold in the pet stores. These conditions are not often caught in the first vet exams of young puppies. It takes several months for the signs of the heart murmur to become obvious....this is long after the pups have left the pet stores and have been sold to the buyers.

I have also seen many dogs missing eyes, ears and limbs from cage injuries or fights in the mill. One of our recent rescues had to have 22 teeth removed because of the decay.

Another thing we see are “do it yourself” surgeries performed in the mills (which is clearly illegal). Bulldogs are delivered via-section which is part of why they are so expensive. When our vet goes in to spay the females we rescue, time and time again we see signs that they have been operated on in the past by a hack. We’ll find dozens of yards of old fishing line that was used to sew up their bellies. And this isn’t just something we have seen once. We see it over and over and over again.

Over the years I have seen the cycle come full circle. In addition to mill dogs, we have taken in hundreds of dogs from shelters and owner surrenders. More often than not, when an owner is surrendering a dog into our care, when asked where they obtained their dog, they’ll say “I know I shouldn’t have, but I “rescued” this dog from a pet store”.

It isn’t uncommon for us to take a bulldog into our rescue where the family paid upwards of \$3,000 for the dog’s purchase from a local pet store (Happiness is Pets is one we see quite a bit). \$3000 is pretty much an unheard of price for a bully puppy, even the most meticulously bred, show quality, pup that’s been health tested and raised in a home. It’s amazing what these pet stores charge for these dogs.

When we review the reasons some of these pet store dogs come into our care, it is often because the owners can’t afford to take care of the dogs medical issues. Yet, they’ve financed the \$3K purchase of this puppy from the store, so they are still paying the purchase cost of the dog, and now have no money left for basic care, not to mention advanced care which many of these pet store puppies need due to their poor breeding.

These stores and these puppies are literally causing financial chaos in the lives of many families who aren’t educated about how to identify a proper breeder. The pet stores don’t interview the purchaser to determine whether they can afford the lifetime care of the dog. They don’t screen to be sure that the home is going to be safe for this particular dog, or breed. A qualified breeder selling a puppy or a rescue placing a puppy, will interview the purchaser. They will want to know where the pet is going, if the home has done research on the breed, if they have prepared properly, and if they are financially solvent and capable of providing care for unexpected situations. As rescuers, this is terribly frustrating. By the time these pet store puppies age, many families can’t afford their basic care, so they don’t take these dogs to the vet, then we get them into our rescue program and they are a medical disaster, costing our non-profit thousands of dollars. It is not unheard of that we spend up to \$7K on a dog that started out in a Cook county pet store like Petland.

I hope what I've shared with you today has helped enlighten you on the plight of the breeding dogs in these puppy mills and the affect it has on purchasers right here in our county.

The good news is, county residents have other options for finding pure-breed dogs. Through a rescue like ours, we offer an alternative to a pet store puppy. We adopt out hundreds of pure breed rescue dogs that are healthy and well behaved. And for people who want a bulldog puppy in particular, we refer them to a skilled network of nearby, highly qualified and respected breeders. The buying public is not lacking in quality options.

Thank you for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions.

#4

Internet Puppy Sellers: No Federal License Required

Currently large-scale, commercial dog breeders who sell puppies for resale to brokers or pet stores are required to be federally licensed and inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). But a gaping loophole in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulations has allowed commercial breeders who sell puppies online, by mail or over the phone to evade oversight. Such facilities, even those with hundreds of dogs, are not inspected by the USDA and can sell thousands of puppies a year to consumers. A new rule proposed by the USDA would close the loophole in the Animal Welfare Act regulations that has allowed many abusive puppy mills to flourish for decades sight-unseen.



The dog pictured above was one of 124 dogs seized by the Pearl River County Sheriff's Department in Carriere, MS with the assistance of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in July 2010. Many of the rescued dogs were suffering from severe malnourishment, painful infections, parasites and infectious diseases. The animals were being housed in cramped, unsanitary conditions without proper medical care. Two dead animals were also removed from the property. The breeders were not required to have a USDA license since they had been selling puppies to consumers online and via classified ads.



In February 2009, The HSUS assisted Wayne County Animal Control with the rescue of 283 dogs from Thornton's Kennels near Goldsboro, NC. Many of the dogs, including the one pictured on the left, were emaciated, had untreated lacerations, severely matted fur and serious skin and eye infections. They were being housed in small cages in cold, unventilated barns. The breeder was selling puppies over the Internet and through classified advertisements, and therefore was not required to have a USDA license. After operating for decades, the breeder was convicted of twelve counts of animal cruelty. Had she been required to have a USDA license and regular inspections, these

horrendous abuses likely could have ended much sooner or could have been avoided altogether.

In August 2008, The HSUS assisted in rescuing nearly 1,000 dogs from a puppy mill in Parkersburg, W.V. The puppies were being sold online on a beautiful website that featured clean and healthy-looking puppies. The reality was much different as seen in the photo below. Many of the dogs found at the facility were filthy, severely underweight, unsocialized and housed in dirty and cramped cages.

The proposed change to the AWA regulations would require the following:

- Large-scale breeders who sell puppies over the Internet or by phone or mail order will now be required to be federally licensed and inspected just like breeders who sell to pet stores.
- The rule will not affect home breeders who sell puppies from their own properties and allow prospective buyers to personally observe the animals on site.
- Small breeders with just a handful of female breeding dogs will continue to be exempt from coverage.



Good morning commissioners,

My name is Marija Schahczinski. I want to thank you for being awarded the opportunity to speak on behalf of Petland in regards to the legislation regarding the ban of the sale of puppies, kittens, and rabbits within Cook County.

Pet stores have requirements and standards that must be met, and by my personal experience I can say that because these animals are a passion to many that work in the industry, the care provided is exemplary. Owners of these pet stores put their reputations and livelihoods at stake when bringing animals into the stores. Our staff is trained and educated well to ensure that the care, treatment, and quality of life offered to the animals surpass expectation.

The training provided and knowledge gained through hands on experience every day with the animals spreads throughout the staff and into the community. Families often frequent the stores, looking for a first time pet, to find another addition to the family, or simply to pass the time. Every visit they witness the devotion of the staff to the wellbeing of the animals, and the dedication to not only the animals but the community as well, offering a wealth of knowledge to all those who desire to learn.

Every day I see people coming in to see the animals, to play with them, and the joy on their faces after the experience. When people come in deciding it is the right time to purchase an animal, they come knowing they will be completely informed prior to making such an important commitment. When people come to find a puppy, they are looking for something specific. They want a puppy they can raise with their children, allowing them to grow and thrive together, and effectively teaching children responsibility and how to respect and love animals. They want a puppy to train and become a member of their family. They want a puppy to raise as a guardian and protector. I have nothing against dog rescues and shelters as I have volunteered at shelters and owned many rescue dogs before, but many times when I have rescued a dog I was not given a medical history, the background of the animals was minimal, and any issues or things worth mentioning were omitted. My brother just recently rescued a dog from a shelter that guaranteed him that she was good with children, had no aggression issues, and was in good health. She is both food and toy aggressive, and within 24 hours of being in my home she had to have emergency surgery for a condition shelter volunteers later admitted was evident during her time at the shelter.

This proposed ban of the sale of puppies, kittens, and rabbits in pet stores would have a detrimental effect on legitimate businesses and everyone involved. In making your decision, please realize this decision affects many lives, my son's and mine included. Animals are a passion of mine, especially dogs. I am extremely proud of the work I do and the care I provide, and I take great pride in seeing our babies go home to loving families. The staff devotes themselves completely to matching the right pets to the right families, and meeting their needs entirely. I invite you to come into any of our stores, interact with our babies, and see what impact pet stores and their animals can have on the community.

Thank you for your time.

Good Morning everyone my name is Stacy Antonsen. I stand before you today not to try to convince you on why you should not vote to close the pet stores but to give you some insight on my relationship with the owners Janet and Dan Star, and to make you see the other side. Throughout the month the word "puppy mills' have been thrown around. Some with much different definitions then person sitting next to them. A definition of a puppy mill also known as a puppy farm is a commercial dog breeding facility that is operated with an emphasis upon profits above animal welfare and is often in substandard conditions regarding the well being of dogs in their care.

This being said I have been given a great opportunity in getting to know Janet and Dan Star. Janet has watched me grow up since the age of 11. She was my dean in middle school and my assistant principal through high school. I then had the honor of reconnecting with her because I was her children's teacher in preschool. I then moved on to become her nanny. I got a lot of insight on their home away from home (Petland) as their nanny. I worked for them as a nanny for a little over 4 years. Janet and Dan has been a great Dou in making the Petland's they own what they have become today. Dan as the background man as his attention to detail behind the sevens, and many long hours makes what we do at the stores so much easier. His knowledge of fish and anything electronic related has been the key to making this business succeed. Janet as everyone at the stores knows is the passion that drives us all. She is the cheerleader, the teacher and the researcher for our company. Their ability to turn a negative situation into a positive one has always amazed me. Whether it's the way both of them get into the trenches when someone needed the day off, or it could be the late night runs to take care of a stubborn puppy that isn't wanting to eat, or better yet it is the way they strive to make their businesses the best by visiting the breeders, to make the one on one connection and ensure they are getting the best quality babies. Besides all of the above it would be the Petland Conferences they go to, to bring new ideas to implement into their stores to make sure that their stores are doing everything 110%.

Anybody listening to this would think how crazy it is that the Stars have sacrificed so much of their time to make sure they are running the best business they can. They spend so much time investing in this company to ever even think of using puppy mills. It makes me upset to think that all these years of blood, sweat, and tears could be vanished with one vote because someone thought that Janet and Dan could ever use puppy mills. I have now been Batavia Petland's Kennel Manager since August and I check each puppy in every week with a licensed vet. It has never crossed my mind that the breeders Janet and Dan use would not be USDA licensed reputable breeders. The breeder's information is disclosed to the customers whenever they ask to see a puppy or kitten. They come with health records, some with pictures other breeders, the dam, the sire, and information on where they are from. In the kennel we are and I expect us to continue with the cleanliness and medications with the animals even after they have come in to my kennel.

My experience with Janet and Dan has been nothing but the best. I joined on to this company because I highly agree with the Petland's mission statement which is to match the right person with the pet and meet the needs of both and to our guest that already have pets we are dedicated to enhancing the knowledge and enjoyment of the human animal bond. Voting to take pet stores away in Cook County and so on, you are not only effecting good people like Janet and Dan, but hard working American employees and the communities our stores are in. If you ever get a chance to walk into a Petland during the day and watch the kids and adults faces light up as we place the babies in the window you will then understand what Petland is all about.

**Statement to Cook County Commissioners Regarding Proposed Ban of
Dogs, Cats, and Rabbits in Cook County
April 9, 2014**

My name is Janet Star. My very first puppy that I got for myself when I moved out of my parent's house was from Petland. He was a toy Poodle I named Lucky. Lucky was the man in my life. He got me through my 20's and 30's. He consoled me and was my best companion. He gave me a reason to get up every day. He helped me pick my husband. He was there when I brought my children home from the hospital. He was the first pet my children knew. They played with him, and he tolerated it all. When he died at the age of 13, my entire family, including our extended family, mourned the loss of a family member.

When my husband and I wanted to open a business, we decided on Petland because we personally know the joy that pets can bring to a family. The human animal bond is a powerful thing.

We have owned the Petland in Hoffman Estates for 8 years. During that time, we have successfully matched thousands of pets with loving families, including adopt a pets and rescue animals of all types. We have watched their pets and their families grow.

We source all of our puppies and kittens from USDA licensed professional breeders and hobbyists. This is not just a carefully practiced statement. I am very careful about where we get our puppies from. I regularly visit the breeders by going on breeder trips. I monitor their USDA reports. I meet their dogs, know many of them by name, and have pictures with some of them. These are not puppy mills. These are people who love pets and want to share the joy of pet ownership with quality puppies. I would not be able to successfully run a business if we did do business with puppy mills because we offer an industry leading warranty. This warranty is much more extensive than the State required minimum warranty because I am confident in our puppies and from where they are sourced.

I know that it seems that if we take the choice of getting puppies from pet stores away, the bad breeders will go away too. But actually, the opposite is true. Without a source such as our store to protect consumers, your constituents, they will go blindly to the internet and newspapers, and unknowingly support substandard breeders through their purchases. The good breeders are licensed, know how to properly care for their dogs and cats, and work with pet stores because they know that we can find their babies GOOD homes. This is important to them too.

This is Jingle, my daughter's Yorkie, and she is PERFECT. Jingle is from a breeder named Virginia. The puppies are raised in her living room so that they can be closely monitored with their mom. Virginia paper trains her pups before she sends them to us, and they make amazing pets and companions for people and their families. Virginia is just one example of a quality USDA licensed breeder who fills our store with loving family companions.

It makes me sad to think that my daughter, along with thousands of other families and perhaps, their children, would be denied the opportunity to meet such amazing pets, and make them part of their lives.

We all agree that puppy mills are horrible places!! We all want to put puppy mills out of business.

Stores such as ours work with good breeders every day. We know the animal business and would like to work with the Commissioners to find a compromise which raises the standards in Cook County and truly impacts the business of puppy mills.

I ask you not to pass this ordinance as it is written today. We have several ideas and options that we could discuss. Passing an ordinance such as this will not solve the problem of puppy mills, and will actually exacerbate an already pervasive problem.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Star, Owner of Petland Hoffman Estates
11 Golf Center, Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
847-490-8820

Cook County Commissioner Board Meeting Testimony

April 9, 2014

Commissioners,

My name is Dan Star, and I own the Petland in Hoffman Estates, Illinois. Over the past 8 years, we have brought love and joy to thousands of families through pet ownership. Countless children held their first bunny in our store, or had their faces licked by a loving puppy, bonding with its new owner.

In addition to completing families, we consistently employ 35-40 people and we have given dozens of high school students their first job. The work ethic and life skills they learned with us have enabled them to move on to roles of greater responsibility both within the industry and outside.

In 8 years, we have generated over \$1,000,000 in sales tax revenue, the majority of which comes from the sales of live animals.

By requiring pet stores to source their puppies only from rescues & shelters, you are drastically limiting the options that are currently available to consumers. While an adoption from a reputable shelter or rescue should always be considered, many consumers are not interested in the pit bull & pit bull mix breeds that represent a large portion of what's available. Furthermore, the source of a shelter animal is not always known. This legislation would require pet stores to get their puppies from rescues and shelters, however Section 3.4 of the Illinois Animal Welfare Act, governs the release of animals from a rescue organization, and it appears to state that shelters are only allowed to release animals to an animal shelter with a shelter license, a foster care permit, or a representative of a not-for-profit, out of state organization.

There are some that say, you should never buy a pet store puppy. The question is why? The retail sale of pets is very heavily regulated in Illinois. Pet stores are required to provide complete health records, including inoculations and any veterinary exams, the name and address of the breeder, a 21 day viral warranty, and a 1 year hereditary & congenital warranty (my store exceeds both of those state minimums with a 30 day viral & 3 year hereditary & congenital warranty). If you buy from a shelter, rescue or small unlicensed breeder, there is no required warranty. Which puppy would you have more peace of mind with?

Commissioners, this legislation will greatly hurt my business, and most, if not all, pet stores in the county. We are not pet supply stores that primarily sell dog food and supplies, and also sell some puppies or a few live animals. We are PET STORES, we are in the quality pet business and our primary focus is live animals, finding those animals the right home, and providing the supplies they need. A significant reduction in the live animal portion of our businesses will likely force their closure. This will cost hundreds of jobs, and millions of dollars in future tax revenue, as well as lose the most regulated source of quality puppies from quality breeders in the county.

I urge you to collaborate with us, as the pet experts, so we can both come up with meaningful legislation that will accomplish the mutual goal of eliminating puppy mills, without the loss of revenue and jobs.

Thank you for your time.

**Daniel Star, Owner
Petland
11 Golf Center
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
(847) 490-8820**



My children, Kyle, Carrigan & Ryan with Jingle and Gomer. We have happily created 3 new animal lovers!!

Internet Puppy Sellers: No Federal License Required

Currently large-scale, commercial dog breeders who sell puppies for resale to brokers or pet stores are required to be federally licensed and inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). But a gaping loophole in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulations has allowed commercial breeders who sell puppies online, by mail or over the phone to evade oversight. Such facilities, even those with hundreds of dogs, are not inspected by the USDA and can sell thousands of puppies a year to consumers. A new rule proposed by the USDA would close the loophole in the Animal Welfare Act regulations that has allowed many abusive puppy mills to flourish for decades sight-unseen.

The dog pictured above was one of 124 dogs seized by the Pearl River County Sheriff's Department in Carriere, MS with the assistance of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in July 2010. Many of the rescued dogs were suffering from severe malnourishment, painful infections, parasites and infectious diseases. The animals were being housed in cramped, unsanitary conditions without proper medical care. Two dead animals were also removed from the property. The breeders were not required to have a USDA license since they had been selling puppies to consumers online and via classified ads.



In February 2009, The HSUS assisted Wayne County Animal Control with the rescue of 283 dogs from Thornton's Kennels near Goldsboro, NC. Many of the dogs, including the one pictured on the left, were emaciated, had untreated lacerations, severely matted fur and serious skin and eye infections. They were being housed in small cages in cold, unventilated barns. The breeder was selling puppies over the Internet and through classified advertisements, and therefore was not required to have a USDA license. After operating for decades, the breeder was convicted of twelve counts of animal cruelty. Had she been required to have a USDA license and regular inspections, these

horrendous abuses likely could have ended much sooner or could have been avoided altogether.

In August 2008, The HSUS assisted in rescuing nearly 1,000 dogs from a puppy mill in Parkersburg, W.V. The puppies were being sold online on a beautiful website that featured clean and healthy-looking puppies. The reality was much different as seen in the photo below. Many of the dogs found at the facility were filthy, severely underweight, unsocialized and housed in dirty and cramped cages.

The proposed change to the AWA regulations would require the following:

- Large-scale breeders who sell puppies over the Internet or by phone or mail order will now be required to be federally licensed and inspected just like breeders who sell to pet stores.
- The rule will not affect home breeders who sell puppies from their own properties and allow prospective buyers to personally observe the animals on site.
- Small breeders with just a handful of female breeding dogs will continue to be exempt from coverage.



Cook County Testimony 4/9/2014

Hello, my name is Brian Winslow, I am the Director of Animal Welfare Education at Petland. As part of my role with the company, I have traveled extensively visiting professional breeders throughout the United States and internationally. I have visited hundreds of breeders and attended numerous breeder educational conferences. I have also been an active participant in countless meetings and gatherings working on and discussing best practice breeder standards.

In my extensive travels, I have found that, like in all professions, there are some bad breeders. However, lumping all breeders that supply pet stores as bad is stereotypical, judgmental and wrong. This unfair representation of the breeder community is not fact-based and it is without scientific merit. Rather, it is an emotional reaction that creates an emotional response, thus ignoring reality. I have spent countless hours and days in quality breeder homes and facilities. They love their dogs and puppies. It is a 24/7/365 lifestyle that I respect because of their devotion to their dogs. The vast majority of breeders maintain facilities that exceed the USDA Animal Welfare Act standard, but unfortunately these breeders are never given credit. It seems these days that only negative news "sells". Those opposed to professional breeders highlight the past misdeeds of the extreme minority of breeders to tarnish all breeders.

Both the HSUS and the ASPCA have been vocal advocates of closing what has been termed the "internet loophole". Taken from HSUS's website "breeders who sell puppies for resale to brokers or pet stores are required to be federally licensed and inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). But a gaping loophole in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) regulations has allowed commercial breeders who sell puppies online, by mail or over the phone to evade oversight. "

When the USDA announced changes to the internet rule, the HSUS stated on their website; "Tens of thousands of dogs suffering in substandard, filthy, and overcrowded cages for years on end will finally get the protection they deserve as a result of a rule the U.S. Department of Agriculture will formally adopt today. This change... will extend federal oversight to thousands of puppy mills that do business online."

They go on to say "Because large-scale dog breeders who sell animals to pet stores (as low as 2% of all dogs sold, according to ASPCA) are regulated, but breeders who sell directly to the public are not, there has been a massive migration of breeders to the latter sales strategy within the last decade or so. If they could sell dogs and escape any federal oversight, why not get in on that act and continue to cut corners on animal care?" Basically, the HSUS has pushed for all breeders to live up to the standards of breeders that are inspected and sold to pet stores, and when the rule change was announced, they were overjoyed. These sentiments are reinforced within the USDA. The majority of complaints received by the USDA from customers and citizens are not directed to those breeders that are licensed and selling to pet stores, instead those complaints are against unregulated breeders and animal hoarders.

There is more oversight of breeders who sell their puppies to pet stores than any other type of breeder, shelter or rescue. Inspection reports for federally licensed breeders are available free of charge on the USDA website. I believe that is the type of transparency that all breeders should welcome.. If a consumer chooses not to buy a puppy from a Cook County pet store, that is certainly their choice and right. But they should also have the right to purchase from a pet store, assuming that the retailer is following all state regulations and acquiring their pets from properly licensed and inspected kennels.

In addition to federal oversight, ALL the Midwest states have state legislation as well, some are similar to USDA regulations, but most exceed USDA regulations. (Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois and Nebraska). This provides two separate set of eyes inspecting kennels.

Illinois is among the states with the most regulated pet stores already. Please consider all the unintended consequences of eliminating a consumer's choice of procuring a pet from a highly regulated industry. In addition to harming Cook County employment, tax revenue, and individual freedom of choice, you are further widening the doors for unregulated players to enter the marketplace if you enact a pet store sales ban. The reality is that consumers want pets, the additional reality is that consumers don't always want an older shelter pet.

Who will fill that void for something that Americans demand?

Thank You.



STATE OF ILLINOIS • OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
JUDY BAAR TOPINKA

April 8, 2014

The Honorable John Fritchey
Cook County Commissioner – 12th District
118 North Clark Street, Room 567
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Dear Commissioner Fritchey:

Due to a scheduling conflict, I am currently in Springfield and unable to attend the Wednesday, April 9, 2014 Cook County Board meeting to testify in person. However, I am submitting my written support for your Puppy Mill Ordinance to be recorded in the official proceeding records.

As you know, I am a huge animal lover. My dogs, Nora and Jack mean the world to me. As Illinois State Comptroller, I initiated the Comptroller's Critters Pet Adoption Program which works with shelters throughout Illinois. To date, we have assisted in the adoption of over 2,411 cats and dogs into loving families. The puppy mill issue is something that I have been fighting for several years. As a supporter of City Clerk Susana A. Mendoza's Chicago Puppy Mill Ordinance, I wholeheartedly back your efforts to protect pets and consumers willing to open their hearts to a needy cat and/or dog throughout Cook County. More importantly, I believe your legislation will vastly improve the living conditions for puppies sold in Cook County, guaranteeing a healthy and happy lifetime of memories for them and their new family. When we find homes for our animal friends, we eliminate the need for shelter's to house, or worse, euthanize the animals. Both of which saves Illinois taxpayers money.

Your ordinance directs families to shelters and humane societies whose business, on a daily basis, is the proper care of pets. Unlike puppy mills, whose main objective is money and not the animal's well-being, the shelters only want to guarantee the welfare of each animal.

I applaud your efforts to follow the City of Chicago in leading the way with the proposal of this necessary ordinance to expand the ban on puppy mills. There are several pets waiting to be united with a loving family. By passing the Cook County Puppy Mill Ordinance, we will provide every one of those families with the experience of the love and devotion of a special companion that will last a lifetime.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Baar Topinka".

Judy Baar Topinka
Illinois State Comptroller

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Cori A. Menkin, Esq.
Senior Director, Puppy Mills Campaign

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Cook County Board of Commissioners
Delivered by Email

April 9, 2014

RE: Cook County pet store sales

Dear Lawmakers:

On behalf over two million supporters of the ASPCA nationwide, I am writing to express the ASPCA's support for a proposed ordinance brought before the Cook County Board of Commissioners regarding the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores within the City. The ASPCA fully supports the banning of the sale of commercially bred puppies and kittens in pet stores.

The ASPCA defines a "puppy mill" as a large-scale commercial breeding operation where profits are given a higher priority than the well-being of the dogs. We estimate that 99% of puppies sold in pet stores come from puppy mills. Truly responsible breeders do not sell their puppies via pet stores or brokers. They want to ensure that their puppies go to good homes, and therefore always meet the prospective purchaser prior to completing a transaction. Moreover, responsible breeders follow their dogs' bloodlines closely to eliminate any hereditary or genetic problems, such as hip dysplasia, from their breeding stock. There is simply no way to track genetic problems if your puppies are sold to unknown purchasers, as many genetic problems do not surface until after one year of age.

By law, any breeder with more than four breeding female dogs who sells puppies to brokers or pet stores must be licensed and inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Unfortunately, this requirement is no guarantee of humane treatment for the breeding dogs. To the contrary, it is a certification that the entity is engaged in the practice of commercially breeding dogs for a profit. Additionally, the standards that USDA licensed breeders are required to meet fall far short of what most people would consider humane. For example, the minimum cage size for dogs housed in USDA licensed facilities is only six inches longer than the dog in each direction. It is legally permissible, and commonplace, for commercial breeders to house breeding dogs in tiny, wire-bottomed cages stacked on top of one another for the dogs' entire lives. To put this in perspective, a dog the size of an average Beagle can be kept in a cage about the size of a household dishwasher for her entire life.

The poor conditions in which these dogs are kept are well documented by USDA. The ASPCA, through its national No Pet Store Puppies campaign, has made public over 10,000 photographs taken by the USDA inside federally licensed commercial breeding facilities during routine inspections. The photos can be seen at www.nopetstorepuppies.com/buy-a-puppy. The photos show the grim reality of where pet store puppies really come from and what the adult breeding dogs are forced to endure year after year.

For the foregoing reasons, I respectfully urge you to adopt the proposed ordinance prohibiting the sale of commercially bred dogs and cats in Cook County pet stores.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Cori A. Menkin

To the Cook County Commissioners,

My name is Angie DeMars and I have owned a very successful pet supply store Noah's Ark Pet Supply in Winnetka's Cook County for over 11 years. I am writing you in **support** of the Cook County Companion Animal and Consumer Protection Ordinance. Having spent my career helping animals , I have seen the horrors of the puppy mills first hand. Noah's Ark Pet Supply has regular adoption events and has never sold animals. My business has thrived every year and my customers are proud to support my business knowing that I take a stand for the animals including rabbits which we rescue and adopt out of our store. Since the time I opened my store, I have seen my customer base become educated and the majority of our pets are now rescues and from reputable breeders. My customers do not want to support puppy mills and continue a horrible circle of abuse and neglect. Please do what's right, there are so many wonderful animals in shelters that need our help and pet stores selling animals can find an honest way to make a profit like myself without having blood on their hands.

Regards,
Angie DeMars
Owner
Noah's Ark Pet Supply
831 Elm Street
Winnetka, IL 60093

April 8, 2014

To whom it may concern,

My name is Daniella Garcia, I live in Posen IL. I have a 10 yr. old son who wanted a canine companion and after much thought I didn't want to go through a rescue, I thought that a puppy would be a better choice because we would be able to train and watch the pup grow up. On October 19, 2013 before my son's birthday we decided to go to **Petland in Chicago Ridge**. We saw a lot of puppies and there was a small 8 week old orange sable Pomeranian, my son and I fell in love with him immediately. After learning that he was only 8 weeks old and that he had come from a good breeder, I was sold. They told me that he came with papers and all this other nonsense, all I knew was that he would be the dog that would accompany my only son and would make our home complete. **After paying \$1,499.99 for the dog and \$300 for the supplies we walked out of Petland with our new puppy. Little did we know...**

We named our Pomeranian Niko, he is smart, a fast learner and we love him. On March 17, 2014, I took Niko to the Animal Medical Center to get neutered. I also had another concern that I wanted them to check out while he was there. Niko appeared to have leg problems when he goes to the bathroom. When he kneels his legs shake and it looks like he is in pain. After his neuter, The Animal Medical Center called me on March 18, 2014 to let me know that Niko's procedure went well but that they discovered **he has double Medially Luxating Patellas with pain in both of his rear legs**. I was mortified because I did not know what that meant but was told he would need surgery. I wanted answers! They only told me that they faxed over a form to the pet store and I needed to follow up with Petland. **After calling Petland, I learned that Pawsitive Solutions would resolve this issue. I did not hear from Pawsitive Solutions for a week** so I went into Petland and requested they call Pawsitive Solutions while I was there to find out when I was going to hear from them. They called me within 10 minutes and told me to make an appointment with the Animal Medical Center for a follow up. I have an appointment this week Wednesday April 9th, 2014. Even though Pawsitive Solutions states they will cover all charges and fees, **what do I tell my son who thinks the dog we have is healthy?** Niko is his best friend, my son is heartbroken and very worried about him. I am too! **Niko is still a puppy, and should not be going through double leg surgery at his age.**

I'm sickened to learn that I was misled and that Niko is actually from a large Missouri breeder that had 121 adult breeding dogs and 68 puppies on their property last September 2013. They told me he came from a good breeder that was USDA approved. The way they said it made me feel like the breeder had the dogs in their house. It makes me uneasy to know that Petland come up with these lies and told me what I wanted to hear so I would make the purchase. Then they conveniently gave me a "Certificate of Pedigree" and told me all would be fine, and it's not. Here we are 5 months later with an unhealthy dog whom we love, that is suffering at such a young age from bad breeding. Even if Pawsitive Solutions pays for the surgery, who is going to take care of Niko the days after surgery and the many weeks of recovery he will need after that?. What if he ends up needing physical therapy? Who will pay for that? I have a job and am a single parent. I purchased Niko through the Petland credit card and I would like a total refund because I did not get a healthy dog like they assured me he was.

I only hope that Niko's story helps out other families who have children that want a canine companion, especially families that only have 1 child who wants to have a healthy companion. This has caused worry and heartache that is unmeasurable. I do not regret meeting Niko but I do regret not adopting a homeless dog from a rescue because if I knew then what I know now, trust me I wouldn't want my son to go thru the pain of knowing his little buddy needs surgery. With that said, it is clear to me that Petland stores only care about the money.

Daniella Garcia

To The Cook County Commissioners:

My name is Gina Polizos. I live in Morton Grove Illinois. I purchased a bulldog puppy (Mack) in 2009 from **Happiness Is Pets in Arlington Heights**. I paid **\$1700.00** for him. At that time Mack was "on sale", for a reduced fee. Apparently no one had shown interest in buying him, and he was already 12 weeks old. Like the other dogs at HIP Mack was confined to a small, wire mesh bottom cage for display. I asked the sales person where Mack came from, and was told "a small private breeder". I asked if they came from puppy mills, and the answer was no. We were led to believe he did not come from a large commercial puppy mill.

After a few months of buying Mack he began loosing big patches of hair. I took him to the vet and they diagnosed him with Demodectic Mange. He had to go in for several medicated dips. Demodex is a parasite that lives in the dogs hair follicle. All normal dogs have some mites on their skin. As long as their immune system is functioning properly, these mites cause no harm. The vet told me that the development of the immune system is under genetic or hereditary control. He said an affected dog often has litter mates that are also affected. **The disease is due to a genetic defect. Affected dogs should not be bred, and the parents of the affected dog should not be bred again.**

When Mack was a year and a half he was diagnosed with Atopic Dermatitis. Canine Atopy is hereditary and a chronic allergic skin disease. **He is on medicine that costs us \$200 a month.** I can't leave him alone without an e-collar on, because he will just keep itching till the point he is a

bloody mess. His allergies are ongoing and get worse with age. **We have spent several thousands of dollars on these medical issues.** It is heartbreaking watching him in so much pain and discomfort. Even with the treatment he cries and whines daily. His quality of life is greatly impacted. Due to the allergies, he gets chronic skin and ear infections. He is in pain and discomfort daily. It's very hard to watch him suffer so greatly even with the medicines.

Mack's medical issues stem from genetics and hereditary. We were led to believe he came from a private breeder with champion dogs, and good health. This was not the case at all. I'm asking that you please support The Cook County Companion Animal and Consumer Protection Ordinance.

Thank You,

Gina Polizos
Sent from my iPad

COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS – TESTIMONY – Ryan Hamel

Cook County Companion Animal & Consumer Protection Ordinance

Ryan Hamel, Petland Inc.

I would like to sincerely thank each of the commissioners for addressing the serious issue of puppy mills, which I would define as any substandard breeder or breeding facility, regardless of size. The welfare of “man’s best friend” is a serious issue that needs to be considered by this group.

Having had pets my entire life and having worked in pet retail for over a decade, I can honestly say – “I CARE ABOUT PUPPIES, I CARE ABOUT WHERE THEY COME FROM, AND I CARE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THEIR PARENTS”. I have no doubt that each and every one of you also care about these same things. I do have one very important question for you, however...

HOW CAN WE HELP?

1. How can we help you and our customers to learn about breeders that pet store puppies come from – I’ve been finding the best puppies for retail stores for several years now. I’ve visited great breeders, substandard breeders, and everything in between.
2. How can we help you to ensure that people looking for pets get the best options, from the most regulated sources, with the most transparent information and the best health warranties – Petland and other retailers have spent decades doing just that.
3. How can we help you ensure that prospective puppy owners don’t turn to the internet where puppy mills thrive, less transparency exists, and more scams are perpetrated – I’ve met several breeders over the years who’s reason for not improving their standards is that they don’t need to sell to retail stores when they can do whatever they want and still sell online.

4. How can we help you and Cook County shelters and humane groups make sure any ordinance will help them - increasing adoptions and decreasing euthanasia rates – we have experience working with shelters and rescues and are more than willing to share ideas.

5. How can we help everyone involved to learn more about an unfamiliar industry, to understand the potential intended and unintended consequences that sometimes occur when all parties do not work together.

6. How can we help you to work with retailers to ensure that any legislation actually protects companion animals and consumers, assuring that our mutual goals are met, and that the stated purpose of the ordinance is achieved – Not only do we want to be a part of the solution, but we can offer many practical ideas to help these solutions come to pass.

7. How can we help you to create an EFFECTIVE, WORKABLE, AND PRACTICAL PIECE OF LEGISLATION that helps puppies, parents of puppies, and the people of Cook County.

You love puppies... so do we

You want to see them come from the best breeders... so do we

You want to make sure Consumers are treated properly... so do we

You want to HELP make things better... so do we

PLEASE LET US HELP YOU.

Dear Commissioner,

I am coming to you today to present just cause regarding operations for Petland. I would like to start by emphasizing the joy brought to our first time customers, and repeat customers, in purchasing pets from our store. We produce such a positive outcome to our customers, by educating them, and providing expert advice with their new family member, whether that is one of our puppies, kittens, or small animals. It is a huge milestone in a child's life, taking home an animal for the first time, it teaches them responsibility, and an unconditional love for animals.

At Petland, we operate and maintain at an extremely high level, caring for all of our animals with superior care and attention. By highly educating our staff, we are able to ensure the greatest quality of life for the animals we send home. We see on a daily basis the confidence in our customer's eyes knowing they had made the right decision, purchasing a pet from us. There are many customers, that may be looking for something specific, that feel confident finding what they are specifically looking for, from us.

Having pets at our store attracts our community. Our pets are handled by adults, children, and other animals, it allows them to stay socialized at a young age. We pride ourselves by knowing exactly where our pets come from, they are properly handled and well taken care of before they even come to our store. We hold our breeders accountable by providing all of their information into our puppy and kitten resource kit, that is available to our customers, even if the customer is not purchasing a pet today.

Banning the ability for us to send home puppies, kitties, and bunnies, I believe, is the wrong approach to shutting down "puppy mills." It is going to negatively impact legitimate businesses, which operate the right way. If instead the focus was on shutting down the actual "puppy mill," it would have no effect on us. At Petland, we have always been about the interest of the animal first, and will continue carrying that standard.

Thank you for your time,

Raechel Hubbert

My name is Cassandra DiNardo. I am opposed to legislation that would eliminate the right of the consumers to purchase their pet from a pet store. I don't believe this legislation will accomplish the goal of eliminating the sale of puppy mill puppies instead I think it will uproot the responsible establishments like the stores that Dan and Janet Star own and operate.

I know that Dan and Janet run an open and honest business. I have worked for them for five years and have not questioned the way they run their establishments. The company has always been honest and forth coming with the information about where our puppies come from; Dan and Janet have always disclosed to employees and their customers anything and everything they know about the animals that are being adopted. They have been certified by AKC and have visited with many of our breeders, breeders vets, and the distributors. We have nine partner veterinarian clinics that work with us as well because we are a reputable company.

From the first day of my training Janet has always made it clear that these animals in the store are her babies, she talks about them all as if they were her own personal pet, she cares for them in that manner too. If there is a question about a dog's health or if an animal needs round the clock care and watching Janet takes it upon herself to bring that baby to her home and personally care for that pet. I remember being told after I told Janet I had sold a puppy she said "We do not sell puppies we find the homes and send them home" and that is the Petland mission statement the one that we at starfish ventures live by "We are dedicated to matching the right pets with the right customer and meeting the needs of both". Pets bring so many positive attributes into the homes of our customers; they keep the family active, they teach the children responsibility and they bring unconditional love.

The verbiage in this legislation is dangerous to us as American consumers. I understand the restrictions on harmful consumables but puppies, kittens, and bunnies are not harmful products. As American consumers the government should not be able to tell us where to get our pets. This industry is already regulated by the government. Many families including my own went to a pet store, Petland in particular to purchase our dogs. We found that we liked knowing that we would raise the animal how we wanted it to be raised and know the history of the animal. We went to Petland after going to multiple shelters and doing research on different options of getting a dog. My family came to the conclusion that a shelter pet was not the right decision for our family for the very reason that we wanted a specific breed and age of our baby. We wanted to know every detail about the new family member before we took it home. We didn't want to have any doubts about the environment it had come from or what kind of past it encountered and so we went to Petland because they met all those needs. By passing this legislation that won't be an option for families like mine and it may cause those families to end up looking in the wrong places for pets or not getting the right fit for their family.

By saying no to Anti-Pet legislation we can keep honest businesses open and keep providing the right pets for the right families. If we take away this right we will be taking away a freedom of the American consumer to make the decisions that are best for themselves and their families leaving them with scarier options and potentially driving them towards the puppy mills and the breeders that are not regulated and reputable. No matter what industry it is there will always be a black-market, a group of individuals who don't want to play by the rules set forth by the government or moral code; But the Star's are not those people they are the corner store that spoils and babies their animals and expects the same from the people that take them home. They educate and continuously train their staff to be the experts on the pets and to match the right pets

to the right home. They provide family members that give unconditional love. They provide the option for families who have the perfect pet in mind. Please don't take that away.

April 9, 2014

Commissioners,

My name is Mark Durband, and I work at Petland. I oppose the current proposed ordinance banning the sale of puppies, kittens, and rabbits in pet stores in Cook County unless they're sourced from shelters or rescues. I'm certain that everybody here today agrees that proper and humane animal care is of paramount importance, that animals need to be protected and standards of care need to be met. We also agree that puppy mills, which are operating and flying under the radar of state & federal inspection and scrutiny need to be abolished. What we are not in agreement on is the road to get to this destination. We do welcome change as long as that change is an improvement in the best interests of both the pet and the pet owner. I have personally been involved in the pet industry for 30+ years. During this time, I have seen dramatic improvements in animal care, from animal husbandry, animal nutrition, veterinary care, and sources as well as the quality of the puppies. The current standards maintained both in our stores as well as at our breeders facilities are miles ahead of what they were when I first started in the industry. We know that the standards at our breeders are high due to the fact that we as a group have seen these facilities. Suggesting that the solution is to have pet stores only offering shelter or rescue animals to the public does not address the root problem. All this will do is adversely impact the businesses that are doing the right thing and buying from reputable, USDA licensed breeders and hobbyist breeders. This negative impact will extend to the many employees of our stores and their families, and beyond to the animal health care professionals in our communities, the suppliers of the products we offer in our stores, as well as the families in your communities who will now be denied the opportunity of adding a new family member to their home. Retailers who are providing a high standard of animal care in their stores are best equipped and positioned to clearly send this message. This legislation would still allow the mills to exist as it does not address the public buying directly from non USDA compliant puppy mills or buying online from these puppy mills. Without retailers, the acquisition of puppies, kittens, and bunnies will go underground and as a result, quality control and sound regulation will be next to impossible. We are here today asking you to not vote in favor of the ban of animal sales by hardworking, legitimate businesses. Everybody speaking here today openly invites you all to visit our stores, to see firsthand the quality of the pets that we offer, the level of care which we maintain, and the cleanliness of our facilities. Come to our stores and meet the people whose lives you'll impact by your decision here today.

Hi my name is Adam Stachowiak and I am the owner of a Petland Retail store that sells puppies. I agree that more regulation is needed in the pet industry however I do not agree that this ordinance will help eliminate substandard breeding of dogs, but will in fact do the opposite.

I own one store that sells purebred puppies but I used to have a store carried only rescue dogs. I can tell you from experience that the economics of having a puppy store that is shelter only store does not work. We lost customers, we lost our business, and the employees lost their jobs.

Just like our retail store a rescue operates as a business. While most have non-for-profit status that does not means that they do not need to be profitable to pay their bills, employees, and directors. It is in the rescue staff's best interest to find as many dogs a possible to adopt to the local community. The rescue community has been importing dogs from other states and other countries to fulfill the needs of their shelters and rescues.

It is surprising that we still think there is a "pet overpopulation problem." According to the US Public Health Service, Chicago O'Hare was the destination airport for 10,125 dogs imported from overseas in 2006, half of which weren't vaccinated. Scientists from the Center of Disease Control estimated that over 199,000 dogs came into the country through the Mexican border that year alone, and in 2007, one organization in Puerto Rico *by itself* shipped more than 14,000 strays to the United States for adoption at shelters. Like every other business the rescue business is all about money and without adoptable dogs, there is no business. Shelters and rescues in the great lakes areas are routinely importing dogs form other regions, and other countries.

With this ordinance, you are taking the smallest and most regulated portion of this industry, about 2% of total puppy sales, and forcing it to be unregulated. The rescue business already has a lack of dogs available but you will be forcing pet stores to carry only rescue dogs. This poses a huge problem. Not only will shelters not want to give pet stores the most adoptable dogs, because they are the most profitable for the rescue, but they will have trouble finding dogs for the stores at all. Rescue groups willing to work with stores could potentially get dogs from other countries or even from substandard breeders and traverse the current laws in place for pet retail stores.

With all of the importing of dogs from underdeveloped countries, we could actually be creating a breeding ground for shelter dogs outside the country and local community. So the problem you see is that by forcing pet stores to carry rescue pets only, you are creating more demand for substandard **breeding** of rescue dogs...

This ordinance will not solve the problem that you are looking for it to solve. Please work with us as pet store owners to really develop a plan that will not only regulate the breeding world but also regulate the rescue and shelter business so that we can truly stop rescues and shelters from pulling on the heart strings of the community and stop sourcing dogs from outside their immediate areas.

Thank you

April 9, 2014

Commissioners,

My name is Deana Kegl. I have worked for Dan and Janet Star at Petland for nearly 8 years. I oppose the current proposed ordinance banning pet stores from selling puppies, kittens, and bunnies in Cook County. As I see it I completely agree to making sure stores are committed to the wellbeing of their animals and where they are coming from. At Petland, it is all about the care and wellbeing of our animals, including those that have been in their families for years, those currently in our care, and the future babies we would have as long as that's not taken away from us. A person should be able to decide where they get their new family member, either from a retail store, shelter, or a breeder.

We have hundreds of people including children who love to visit our babies every week. It's an important time for the animals who get to be socialized, which makes them better pets. It's also an important time for the future pet owners who get to meet all types of animals and gain knowledge of the different breeds and animal care. It's an experience that no one wants to lose. I don't see why anyone would want to take that away.

I'm sure you probably all have an experience with being a child and how cool and fun it was to visit a pet store. I do... I wasn't able to have pets growing up but my mom took me to the pet store. I have so many amazing memories that I cherish today. Those memories make me smile to this day.

I see children everyday light up with excitement when coming to our store. If you have never been you should visit us. Maybe then you would see the amount of happiness we bring to people on a daily basis and that this ban will be heartbreaking to thousands of people.

I am very proud of the place I work for and this ban will be a huge loss to our community. We are in the business to complete families and this ban will take this experience away.

I do hope that you take these thoughts into consideration while making your decision.

Thank you.
Deana Kegl



**TESTIMONY OF THE PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL
FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF COOK COUNTY
IN OPPOSITION TO ORDINANCE 14-2408**

April 4, 2014

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) appreciates the opportunity to offer the Board of Commissioners of Cook County our views regarding the proposed ordinance prohibiting the retail sale of dogs, cats and rabbits in pet shops in Cook County. As the country's largest pet trade association, representing the interests of all segments of the pet industry throughout the United States, PIJAC counts among its members national associations, organizations, corporations and individuals involved in the commercial pet trade. More specifically, PIJAC represents the interests of pet stores, distributors, pet supply manufacturers, breeders, retailers and pet owners throughout the state of Illinois and across the country.

Let me start by saying that nobody cares more about healthy and safe pets than do PIJAC and our members. We have for many years provided a well-respected animal care certification program that is widely utilized by not only persons in the commercial pet trade but shelters and humane societies as well. Our association has long been recognized as the voice for a responsible pet trade, and we routinely advocate legislative and regulatory proposals establishing governmental mandates where appropriate to advance the public interest and welfare of pets. PIJAC works closely with USDA to ensure effective enforcement of the federal Animal Welfare Act, and has since its inception. We regularly work with federal and state agencies as well as local governments to advance animal welfare interests.

Even as we have worked to raise standards of care, PIJAC has battled misconceptions about the quality of pet store animals and the source of such animals. The unsubstantiated assertion that pet store puppies generally come from substandard breeding facilities is commonly used as a smoke screen to obscure the fact that the overwhelming majority of pet owners who choose pet stores bring home a happy, healthy pet and that they remain highly satisfied with their pet store experience.

The reality is that almost all pet store puppies originate from USDA licensed breeders who are regularly inspected and found to comply with appropriate care standards. By contrast, many of the dogs and cats from other sources, including rogue Internet operators, private breeders, shelters and rescues, did not come from licensed breeders.

Simply reading through the "Whereas" clauses associated with this ordinance, you are demonstrating a prejudice against USDA licensed breeders and, by extension, the local businesses who sell the animals they raise. By deferring to HSUS and other activist organizations instead of doing the necessary due diligence to research the breeders who supply dogs, cats and rabbits to your local retailers, you indicate that you are more interested in sending a message than addressing a real problem. PIJAC has actively supported cooperative efforts among representatives of the pet products, veterinarian and animal welfare communities to adopt state-of-the-art breeding welfare standards, starting with an agreement last year on what constitutes a puppy mill, which appears below. However, the industry decries the casual use of this term because it is often used in an overly broad and incorrect manner to describe ALL breeders, responsible and irresponsible.

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“The HSUS identified . . . as a puppy mill: an operation that sells dogs for money and fails to breed them appropriately or provide adequate housing, shelter, staffing, nutrition, socialization, sanitation, exercise, and veterinary care. The definition was agreed to last year by the HSUS, the ASPCA, the American Pet Products Association, the Pet Industry Distributors Association, the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, and retailers Petco and Petland.”

HSUS, Animal Sheltering, Nov. – Dec. 2013, page 36.

What purpose does this proposed ordinance serve? It doesn't protect consumers, who already enjoy far more protection in the law for the animals they get from pet stores than from any other source. They would merely be deprived of looking to a pet store as one of several alternatives for acquiring a pet, and in the process lose statutory protections that they currently enjoy. It doesn't protect the animals themselves. As already noted, pet store puppies are as healthy as any others and typically receive more frequent veterinary care than puppies from other sources. As well-intentioned as this proposal may be, it is unsupported by all available facts.

It should also be noted that breeders who provide animals to retailers are subject to USDA scrutiny and oversight. Banning the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits by pet stores that are subject to strict regulation and sourcing transparency will only drive prospective pet owners to unscrupulous sellers of pets who are not licensed and are unconcerned about compliance with animal care standards. Thus, in considering an arbitrary and capricious ordinance, Cook County risks enacting a law that will not only fail to alleviate the conditions about which it has concerns, but will actually exacerbate the very problem the ordinance would seek to address.

Animals delivered to pet stores in Cook County are highly regulated:

- In the state of their birth
- In the state of their distributor
- By the federal government
- By Illinois when the animals enter the state
- And animal cruelty is a criminal offense everywhere

Some make the claim that prohibiting the sale of commercially bred dogs and cats in pet stores will lead to more adoptions of shelter animals. No independently developed data supports this claim. PIJAC knows that animal control facilities and non-profits are often excellent sources for pets for some prospective pet owners, however, not for everyone. Many shelter animals are relinquished because of socialization or health issues. Adoption may not be an appropriate option for families looking for a certain breed. There are varied reasons why families choose the animals they do. They should have that choice and not be denied the pet that best fits their family's requirements.

The proposed ordinance also presents problems in that it makes the very existence of pet stores currently selling dogs, cats and rabbits within the county illegal. As currently written, the ordinance would outlaw the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits from any source other than rescues, shelters or a private owner who gives the animal to the store without compensation beginning on July 1st. The stores within your county who currently sell dogs, cats or rabbits would be forced to immediately cease sales. Animals currently in their possession will need to be returned, given away or relinquished - possibly to shelters and rescues, adding to the problem this ordinance seeks to address – at the retailers' expense. And because small, independent pet stores do not enjoy the economies of scale and other economic advantages of their big-box competitors when it comes to pet products, they cannot rapidly change their business model and remain profitable. It is highly likely that they will be forced to close or relocate outside Cook County, costing the county tax revenue and costing their employees their jobs.

Hyperbole and emotionalism are poor substitutes for rational evaluation of objective information in establishing public policy. PIJAC recognizes that a few substandard facilities supplying pet stores do exist, as do substandard breeders providing dogs directly to the public and, in fact, substandard shelters as well. And, our efforts to ensure humane standards of care are met in all of these facilities will continue. However, singling out pet stores for specious generalizations based on anecdotal evidence will **NOT** eliminate the existence of substandard conditions. While this proposal may be a “feel good” approach it only diverts attention away from efforts to really accomplish effective solutions and we urge the Board not to move forward with the proposal.

We would also call your attention to the comments made by the Chicago Veterinary Medical Association in opposition to the Chicago ordinance that passed last month: “The Chicago Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) strongly believes that ongoing education is a much more effective method to increase pet owner awareness and bring about the desired positive change necessary to address valid concerns regarding unethical, unscrupulous breeders who are the ultimate problem.”¹ Their statement cites the several more stringent protections offered to consumers who buy from pet stores as a primary reason for their opposition.

It should also be noted that just last week, a judge granted a preliminary injunction against the ban ordinance passed by the city of Phoenix, which was cited as a precedent in your ordinance’s language. In granting this injunction, the court found that the city’s ordinance would be likely to cause “irreparable harm” to pet store owners within the city. Until this legal challenge to the Phoenix ordinance is seen through to its conclusion, it would be irresponsible of the Board of Commissioners to pass a materially similar ordinance that could subject the county to a similar legal challenge.

PIJAC is highly sympathetic to the concerns motivating this proposed code amendment, but an outright ban on retail pet sales is unjustified, harmful to the future of the local economy and ultimately will fail to better protect pets. We respectfully urge the Board of Commissioners to reject the ban and not impose excessive restrictions on all pet owners by punishing legitimate local businesses that are committed to the health, safety and well-being of animals and who are positive, contributing members of the local community and economy.

If the purpose of this proposal is to place tighter restrictions on the sources of animals coming into Cook County, PIJAC would welcome the opportunity to work with the members of the Board and other government officials to raise the bar to ensure proper animal sourcing. For instance, common sense solutions would require:

- Animals come from only USDA licensees
- Breeders sourcing dogs, cats or rabbits into a Cook County pet store shall not have an entry on their last USDA inspection report that directly impacts animal health (these records are searchable online) – these inspection reports could travel with the animal and be made available to the customer

We would welcome the opportunity to work with Cook County to arrive at a meaningful public policy solution related to the care of animals. By working together we can make sure the people of Cook County continue to have access to healthy animals to love as pets.

Thank you greatly for your consideration of our views.

Mike Bober
Vice President, Government Affairs
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council

1 - <http://www.chicagovma.org/article/cvma-statement-city-chicago-proposed-companion-animal-and-consumer-protection-ordinance>