

THE FACTS ABOUT: Retail Pet Sale Bans

A retail pet sale ban will not stop bad breeders.

● THE ISSUE

Everyone agrees that bad breeders who mistreat and neglect animals need to be put out of business. But the activists who seek to stop them by targeting pet stores with retail pet sale bans are misinformed. Bans will not stop bad breeders.

● WHAT WILL A PET SALE BAN REALLY DO?

Bans will harm highly-regulated pet stores, eliminate the most transparent source of pets that provides purchasers with legal protections, and drive prospective pet owners to unregulated, unlicensed and potentially unscrupulous pet-sellers.

A ban will boost the black market for pets, where bad breeders who don't adhere to care standards can sell puppies with diseases or genetic defects, and families are left with huge bills and without the legal recourse of a warranty, such as those offered by many pet stores and required in many states.¹

Without pet stores to personally interact with and select their new pet, families may turn to online sources, where they could fall victim to the "puppy scams" that have surged in recent years—tricked into sending unrecoverable money for a nonexistent dog.

Due to various limitations, the best option for pet ownership for some families are the pure- or purpose-bred dogs offered by pet stores. They may need a specific breed due to health considerations — 30 percent of Americans suffer from pet allergies.²



THE CASE FOR ENFORCING EXISTING REGULATIONS AND KEEPING PET STORES IN BUSINESS

Fake online pet sellers and puppy scams have surged
39% since 2017⁴

80% of sponsored online advertisements about pets may be fake⁵

California veterinarians have seen an uptick in consumers purchasing sick dogs from unregulated sources since the state's implementation of a ban at pet stores⁶

Nearly half of states currently have pet purchase protection laws to safeguard consumers¹

78% of voters agreed that before passing new regulations or bans, the state is better off enforcing the regulations already on the books to ensure that all breeders are held to the same standards of care⁷

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Or, with young children, they may not be able to take on behavior risks – 47 percent of rehomed dogs are relinquished because of pet problems, including aggressive behaviors.³

THE TRUTH ABOUT PET STORES

The fact is that pet stores and the licensed breeders they work with are a highly-regulated, best-in-class source of pets that are inspected regularly, provide veterinary exams, and keep detailed records of the condition and care of their animals:

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) established and enforces humane care standards under the federal government's Animal Welfare Act that regulate the transportation, purchase, sale, housing, care, handling and treatment of animals for use as pets.
- Breeders with five or more breeding females that are not USDA-licensed are prohibited from selling to pet stores.

- USDA-licensed breeders are routinely inspected to ensure they are complying with humane standards for veterinary care, shelter, food, and clean water.
- Pet stores are also regulated by state laws regarding animal care and warranties and are required to keep records related to the health, veterinary care and source of the animals they sell.

ENFORCEMENT IS THE SOLUTION

Retail pet stores are the only place that families can turn to for peace-of-mind that they are bringing home a pet that was raised under federal and state care standards, has a detailed medical history, and in many cases, are protected by a consumer warranty.

Instead of banning pet stores, the best way to address bad breeders is for states to set and enforce standards of care that breeders must meet in order to do business with pet stores.



Before passing new regulations or bans, states should spend energy and resources on updating and enforcing existing regulations and going after bad breeders, to ensure that all breeders are held to the same standards of care.

¹ American Veterinary Medical Association. <https://www.avma.org/advocacy/state-local-issues/resource-guidance-pet-purchase-protection-laws>

² Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. <https://www.aafa.org/pet-dog-cat-allergies/>

³ ASPCA, National Rehoming Survey (2015). <https://www.aspc.org/animal-homelessness/shelter-intake-and-surrender/pet-statistics>

⁴ BBB Alert: Beware of Puppy Scams This Holiday Season – Findings by BBB Reveal a Surge in Complaints and Scam Reports. (n.d.). <https://www.bbb.org/article/scams/14213-puppy-scams-how-to-protect-yourself-from-fake-online-pet-sellers>

⁵ Puppy Scams: How to Protect Yourself from Fake Online Pet Sellers. (2017, November). <https://www.bbb.org/article/scams/14213-puppy-scams-how-to-protect-yourself-from-fake-online-pet-sellers>

⁶ ABC 10 San Diego <https://www.10news.com/news/team-10/puppy-dies-four-hours-after-sd-family-buys-it-vets-say-new-law-may-be-part-of-the-problem>

⁷ PIJAC 2020 National Survey