

## TALKING POINTS:

# Animal Care Standards

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## CURRENT STATUS OF ANIMAL CARE STANDARDS:

- Consistent regulation and uniform oversight don't exist to make sure all pet providers care for their animals appropriately, leaving the animals vulnerable to substandard treatment or neglect.
- This not only jeopardizes animal health and wellbeing; it creates human health risks as well since animals may not have been given necessary vaccinations or veterinary exams to prevent and identify the presence of zoonotic diseases.
- Currently, there are federal and state laws that regulate animal care by licensed and inspected dog breeders and distributors, and there are state and local laws regarding care, warranties and transparency that regulate some sources such as breeders and pet stores.
- Most states don't have any standards of care that animal rescues and shelters—who provide nearly half of the dogs (44 percent) and cats (47 percent) that Americans bring home as pets each year<sup>1</sup>—must meet. In contrast, pet stores that are highly regulated and, in most states, frequently inspected, account for just four percent of dogs.

## WHY EQUAL STANDARDS OF CARE ARE IMPORTANT:

- No animal should be left vulnerable to substandard treatment or neglect, no matter who is responsible for their care. It is only right that all providers of pet care should be regulated, inspected and held accountable for appropriate standards of care.
- Holding all animal providers to basic standards of care will safeguard the health of the animals, mitigate the spread of diseases which pose a threat to both animals and humans, and provide peace of mind for pet adopters.
- While most states do not have laws that protect the health and wellbeing of animals in all pet care facilities, some have set excellent examples for uniform standards of care, such as:
  - Colorado's Pet Animal Care Facilities Program (PACFA) ensures that pet care facilities meet or exceed minimum standards of care, holding and record keeping.
  - Wisconsin's Dog Seller and Dog Facility Operator rules regulate those that deliver pet dogs to the public, including non-profits that shelter or foster 25 dogs or more each year, dog breeders and pet stores.
  - Connecticut, Maine and New York have registration requirements or animal care regulations that apply to municipal shelters and/or private rescues.

## CALL-TO-ACTION:

Every organization that works with the animals that will become beloved companions should be required to provide high quality care and to be subject to appropriate government oversight to ensure it. The most responsible way to protect both the animals and the people who ultimately bring them into their homes as pets is to establish appropriate standards of care and hold all pet providers accountable to them.

<sup>1</sup> 2017-2018 American Pet Products Association National Pet Owners Survey. <https://www.mceldrewyoung.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2017-2018-Pet-Survey.pdf>