

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Business & Industry
For HB 870

Compiled on: Monday, April 24, 2023 7:49 PM

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Hearing Date: April 24, 2023 8:30 AM

MARTIN KRALIK
SELF & RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERS ALLIANCE
DALLAS, TX

argued a pet store ban is necessary because retail pet stores across Texas sell puppies sourced from out-of-state, large-scale commercial breeding facilities. They further claimed puppies are shipped hundreds upon hundreds of miles from these facilities to Texas via the "puppy mill pipeline". These groups even claimed these pets often arrive at retail pet stores dehydrated and sick from super viruses like Campylobacter and Giardia. Fortunately this is untrue because pet stores source from licensed and inspected breeders as stated above and they are further subject to all state and federal animal welfare laws.

MARTIN KRALIK
SELF & RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERS ALLIANCE
DALLAS, TX

OPPOSE HB 870
Proponents of this bill argue a pet store ban is necessary because retail pet stores across Texas sell puppies sourced from out-of-state, large-scale commercial breeding facilities, further claiming puppies are shipped hundreds upon hundreds of miles from these facilities to Texas via the "puppy mill pipeline". These groups even claimed these pets often arrive at retail pet stores dehydrated and sick from super viruses like Campylobacter and Giardia. This is untrue - pet stores source from USDA and otherwise licensed, regulated and inspected breeders and they are further subject to all state and federal animal welfare laws. The acceptable sources(shelters/rescues) for pets in this bill cannot and will not tell where the animal came from - no consumer protection.
Why would we want to eliminate pets with recorded ancestry and best most healthy source of pets to be sold to the public?
WE SHOULD NOT!
Please oppose HB 870.

Zandra Anderson
Self Animal Law Attorney
Hilshire Village, TX

AGAINST HB 870. This is an effort to put yet another small business out of existence. Dictating that dogs or cats cannot be obtained from qualified breeders or licensed breeders is misplaced. What is the purpose of the bill? The purpose is to put pet stores out of business while rescue organizations can sell dogs without any scrutiny. Shelters are a petrie dish for disease and animals from these facilities break with kennel cough, and far worse all the time. Who are the breeders of shelter dogs? Some are from unscrupulous breeders who cull dogs or owners who let dogs indiscriminately breed. This law actually supports bad breeders while trying to eliminate good breeders. This makes absolutely no sense.

Dorothy Swanson

self/ retired and dog owner

Houston, TX

I am opposed to HB 870. My first puppy came from a pet store and was a wonderful dog. But, as I became more educated, my next puppy came from a respected home based breeder with health testing and champion blood lines. I entered the wonderful world of dog sports – competing in agility at the national level, showing and finishing my dog to his Championship in the AKC and doing therapy work in area nursing homes and hospitals. I feel people need to have their choice of where they purchase their dog or cat, whether it is from a pet store, a small hobby breeder or a shelter. Texas is a wonderful state that we should be proud of and support of our personal choices.

Several weeks ago there was chatter on my NextDoor feed about someone selling 50 puppies out of the back of pickup. This is what will happen when you take away choices such as Pet Stores or small home-based breeders. Texas already has strong animal cruelty statutes to address both civilly and criminally. If there is animal cruelty at any facility, then laws are NOT BEING ENFORCED! Making more laws to enforce the existing laws does nothing to prevent cruelty.

Elizabeth Judice

Self

Waxahachie, TX

Pet store sell dogs that have come from not so reputable breeders. Breeders pride themselves on breeding health dogs. This bill will take away the protections that come with purpose-bred pets.

Robyn Futcher

Seaborne

Katy, TX

- Please don't condemn whole categories of lawfully conducted businesses because some aren't living up to current law. Texas already has strong animal cruelty statutes to address both civilly and criminally. If there is animal cruelty at any facility, then laws are NOT BEING ENFORCED! Making more laws to enforce the existing laws does nothing to prevent cruelty.
- In the United States, we are taught to judge individuals and groups by their conduct, not by their category. This bill seeks to do the opposite, to ban an entire category of businesses because some in this category have not lived up to their responsibilities. Our group urges you to instead hold lawbreakers accountable and pass reasonable laws that encourage genuine improvements in animal care and wellbeing.
- Proponents of HB 870 say millions of pets sold annually by breeders??? However, Pet store sales amount to approximately 4% but SHELTERS AMOUNT TO 38% ??? the numbers don't add up!
- PET STORE SOURCES FOR ANIMALS ARE USDA & TX LICENSED BREEDER ACT INSPECTED, LICENSED, REGULATED ENTERPRISES – THE ABSOLUTE BEST SOURCE FOR HEALTHY HAPPY ANIMALS AS OPPOSED TO SHELTERS/RESCUES WHO CANNOT AND WILL NOT TELL THE SOURCE OF THEIR ANIMALS!
- If shelter dogs were wanted, the shelters would be empty instead of full the brim and sent out to fosters, another way to hide the dogs and their welfare
- Shelters in Texas are totally unregulated.
- States and cities that have done this have forced the market underground creating a whole host of separate issues.
- Dogs are being left at the border and adding to the stray dog problem.
- Shelter/rescue dogs pose many potential problems of unknown ancestry, unknown health history, and unknown temperament history that can and has endangered human life.
- The problem isn't pet stores or sporting dog breeders, but a larger issue of animal-extremist operations reaping large profits through rescue/adoption organizations and donations from unsuspecting citizens.

chrix cuello

Self

Houston, TX

We oppose

LaTayvia Darrett
Self
Houston, TX
We OPPOSE!

Treyson Saucier
Self
League city, TX
Oppose

Jade Youngblood
Petland
Houston, TX
I oppose

Laura Zamora, General Manager
self, General Manager
San Antonio, TX

My name is Laura Zamora. Animal Welfare is my life's mission and this issue is very dear to me. I have volunteered at local animal shelters and dog rescues. I have adopted two senior special needs dogs from Animal Care Services, and I am an active advocate with the Texas Legislative Network for animal welfare. In addition, I am a General Manager at Petland, where I can practice my passion, sensitivity and duty to Animal Welfare.

We are not in competition with shelters and rescue organizations, and our puppies are not taking the spot of a shelter pet, nor contributing to a shelter pet's loss of life. Furthermore, we DO NOT support or utilize Puppy Mills.

It is a misnomer that any professional breeder is a Puppy Mill. Like you, I abhor the existence of Puppy Mills and all that they represent.

HB 870 DOES NOT address the issue of puppy mills. It is NOT a ban on Puppy Mills, as some believe it to be. I would like State Officials to partner with organizations like Petland to identify the Puppy Mills and to boldly transform the laws that govern them. (Not penalize the responsible establishments like Petland and the breeders that are thoughtfully vetted). Our current animal protection laws must be strengthened, the language tightened, inspections increased, and standards of care improved.

We also want the elimination of puppy mills. There is a right way and a wrong way to eliminate puppy mills. This bill is the wrong way. This ban will not shine the light on irresponsible breeders. It will only drive them further underground, where there is no regulation, no enforcement and our animals will suffer.

Professional breeders like the ones partnered with Petland, operate above and beyond the standards articulated in the Animal Welfare Act. Our breeders surpass the minimum standards, our puppies come from breeders who, socialize their dogs, provide routine vaccinations, deworming and medical care, the animals have ample space to run and play indoors in a climate controlled space and outdoors in spacious enclosures to ensure their safety.

Petland has a vast network, they have spent years building positive working relationships, with breeders, all with the goal of ensuring these puppies are well cared for and healthy. Who better to provide insight about these breeders and their practices than those in the industry? Together, we can all set a precedence and truly tackle this national issue.

HB 870 will only sabotage your efforts and lose one of your greatest allies. Divided we accomplish nothing. We are stronger together. This ban is not the solution, it will only exacerbate the problem and will not impact the protection of our animals.

The State of Texas and Petland have common values, common interest and a common goal. The solution is to partner with allies like Petland, strengthen our current laws, regulations and standards of care; as well as increasing efforts to educate society on responsible pet ownership.

Joshua Nie
Petland
Prosper, TX
Oppose

Karla Montanez

Self

Frisco, TX

Oppose bill

Paige Tohill, Miss

Petland Katy

Katy, TX

Petland Katy is a great organization to work for. We care for the animals and make sure they are getting the care they need.

David Moreno, Mr

Petland / Employee

San Antonio, TX

Please do not pass this bill - it does nothing to protect Texans and nothing to stop bad breeders.

Paul Ressler

Rancher

Honey Grove, TX

Please stop selling out to anti animal rights groups. Their goal is to eliminate private ownership of all animals! They are funded and backed by woke minded people that think the same! This bill strips basic rights of people and businesses to protect and promote animal ownership. Please vote against this ok.

David Hubbard

Self and Animal Legal Defense Fund

Austin, TX

On behalf of the Animal Legal Defense Fund, I am writing to offer support FOR HB 870 by Rep. Patterson. This bill would help end the out-of-state puppy mill to pet store pipeline and protect Texas families from the predatory and deceptive practices at puppy-selling pet stores remaining across the state. Currently, six states and over 450 localities (including 17 in Texas) have already banned this practice.

Pet stores typically acquire their dogs and cats from inhumane commercial breeding facilities, often called “puppy mills” or “kitten mills”. Pet stores are a preferred sales outlet for puppy mills because they allow the cruelty at the mills to remain hidden from consumers. Pet stores that adhere to a business model relying on the sale of animals from inhumane sources threaten animal welfare, consumer protection, and public health. State action is crucial because federal laws are insufficient, and enforcement is inadequate.

Selling commercially bred cats and dogs at pet stores endangers both animals and consumers. Kittens and puppies who are bred to be sold at pet stores are kept in crowded, unsanitary cages and often lack adequate food, clean water, veterinary care, or exercise. Due to a lack of proper socialization and separation from their mothers at too young an age, puppies bred in mills are more likely to experience behavioral and psychological problems throughout their lives. Mother dogs forced to give birth to multiple litters year after year are ultimately abandoned or killed when they are no longer able to produce puppies.

As a result of mills' breeding practices and the animals' poor living conditions, it is common for animals to suffer from serious genetic conditions and deadly diseases. Many families are devastated to discover that their recently purchased (and not inexpensive) puppy is seriously ill, sometimes within hours of coming home, and may require extensive veterinary care to try and save their sick animal. Some of these animals ultimately die. Surviving animals often struggle with lifelong health and behavioral issues.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund regularly receives requests for legal assistance from people who have unknowingly purchased sick animals and are now saddled with thousands of dollars in veterinary bills. HB 870 safeguards future consumers from experiencing similar heartbreak.

Of note, however, is the fact that under HB 870, consumers will still be able to purchase purebred animals directly from breeders. This bill only impacts the sale of dogs and cats at pet stores. Pet stores do not typically purchase animals from small-scale breeders; instead, these animals come from mills – often out-of-state – that frequently have long histories of Animal Welfare Act violations. Due to inadequate enforcement at the federal level, even the most egregious offenders are rarely shut down. HB 870 simply would cut off the Texas sales pipeline for some of the worst commercial breeding facilities in the country.

Stephen Soape

Self Pet Consultant at Petland

Tyler, TX

I vote no

Matt D'Agostino

Petland Tyler

Tyler, TX

I oppose the bill given the high quality care and quality of our animals and where we get them from. Our Petland franchise is a top tier organization that provides families with life companions, service animals and emotional support animals.

Sandra Trujillo

Self

Tyler, TX

I oppose this bill

Chase Jackson

Self

Tyler, TX

I oppose

cindy griswold

self

JOHNSON CITY, TX

· I would like to voice my oppostion toe HB 870

This bill will prevent people from having the opportunity to purchase a purpose bred pure breed dog from a pet store. Pet stores purchase the pure bred dogs that they sell from licensed and regulated breeders. These USDA breeders have to meet husbandry standards set by the USDA, that includes a annual inspection by a USDA veterinarian. They also are afforded reasonable purchase guarnatees which include the ability to return the animal within a reasonable time frame.

Unfortunately these same requirements don't apply to rescues which in Tx are unregulated. While there are many great rescues that screen both the dog and their potential owners. There are also those that are not as reputable. Many of the dogs the go through rescues or shelters have either behavior or health issues. Will adequate screening take place when another layer between the purchaser and the rescue/shelter source of the pet. Will the purchaser get a history for that pet including where it was sourced and what type of environment it came from. I know of instances where dogs with a history of bites are placed in inappropriate homes.

When people determine what type of dog they want if they can't find that puppy at a pet store or a responsible hobby breeder they will go to alternate sources that will not give them the same type of post purchase support. They will turn to places like craigs list, online puppy mills or parking lot sellers. These sellers often don't offer the ability to return the pet if it isn't working out or any continuing support on any type of problem that comes up. Often people that purchase this way aren't given contact information. If the pet doesn't work out they can end up in rescue, the shelter or dumped somewhere.

I think people should have the chance to purchase the dog of their choice. If people want to purchase a rescue great, if they want a purebred great.

Texas has great animal cruelty laws which if enforced should prevent animal cruelty and neglect. We don't need more laws that will have the unintended consequence of limiting a persons choice to have the pet of their choice. What we do need is more education on being a responsible owner.

Thank you for reading this email

Cindy Griswold

John Bowlin

Self

League City, TX

I'm opposed to this.

Mailee Vega

Self sales manager

Deer park, TX

I oppose this bill. People can choose what and where they get their animals. Pet stores have staff in place to take care of the animals more than these breeders do who still sell animals.

James Sessions
Self, self employed
Flint, TX

I oppose this bill.

Chris Anliker
Self
Tyler, TX

No

Heather Stroud
Self/Petland
Tyler, TX

Oppose

Alex Brisco
Opposed to organization
Tyler, TX

Opposed. As long as there is proper care and adequate space there shouldn't be a problem.

Delores Adams
Self
Tyler, TX

I oppose

Tiffany Williams, Mrs
Animals everywhere
Tyler, TX

When first reading over the bill, I was very concerned for the dogs and cats who have already been bred and could struggle to find homes without the resources of pet stores. However, if breeders are still allowed to sell to individuals the animals will be able to find homes. In the best case scenario, these breeders will take a hit financially thus leading to less and less breeders and a greater percentage of less fortunate animals in good home situations. Because of the damage this will cause breeders' businesses I hope dearly that all breeders will be under closer observation to avoid any animals having frustrations taken out on them. I vote yes to this bill and hope to see it followed up with protective care of animals in breeder businesses everywhere.

Jennifer Stone
Petland
Tyler, TX

No

Jessica Mandela
Self/Cashier
Tyler, TX

I vote No. Animals sold by pet stores are able to be trained as emotional support and trained as service Animals. Taking this away means we are taking away these services that emotionally, mentally and physically people need. And not just this issue, but people deserve to have not just companions but best friends as well.

James Appl

Petland

Tyler, TX

I want dogs to be sold in pet stores

Carlos Tyeskey

Self

Tyler, TX

I oppose this bill because the lose of jobs

Mishel Lea Bradley

Self

Tyler, TX

I oppose this bill. Taking dogs and cats out of pet stores would cause many people losing their jobs and promotes back yard breeders without regulations.

Linette Holmes

Self

Tyler, TX

I vote to oppose this bill because many jobs would be lost and this supports improper dog breeding practices

Brenda Ayala, Shift lead Kennel Technician

Petland

Chandler, TX

No

Maltisha Brummett

Self

Waco, TX

I oppose

Isabela Salazar

Self

Tyler, TX

No

Jennifer Brummett

Self

Waco, TX

Opposed

David Carlisle

Self

Waco, TX

Oppose

Angela Fowlkes
Self
San Antonio, TX

Oppose

Marc` Cook
Self
Kaufman, TX

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my opposition to HB 870 and to ask that you not support it. While that you do support HB 3563 which deals with logical and reasonable changes for pet stores. Texas dealt with an ideologically identical bill in the 2021 legislative session. In the end, the act of taking away someone's livelihood – and the livelihood of their employees – was not acceptable to many committee members and even Governor Abbot so an outright pet store ban did not pass.

This year, many of the same individuals and groups that promoted the first iteration of the bill here are back. When bills aimed at outlawing pet stores first appeared about a decade ago they were considered so radical, few legislative bodies would touch them. To get around this problem the national animal rights groups behind them developed a tactical solution to make them more palatable. They pushed legislation in jurisdictions where there were no pet stores and therefore no stakeholders to argue against them.

Ten years later it turns out that only 24% of the jurisdictions that enacted some sort of pet store restriction had a pet store in the first place! From a marketing standpoint, this approach worked wonders. It enabled the campaigners to sell their bills using a bandwagon sort of argument, Please don't be taken in by this cynical marketing ploy.

Many states that took this plunge first are now seeing the negative side effects and are now in the process of repealing such bills. Indiana, Washington and Florida just to name a few.

- Passing HB870 would create a retail monopoly for the nonprofit sector and put taxpaying Texans out of business. • HB870 would mandate that Texas pet stores swap their highly regulated source of pets for a supply of pets that is largely unregulated and often unknown.
- Phasing out Texas's pet stores would decrease the type and quality of dogs available to our consumers by replacing ones that the public wants with dogs that are typically older and of limited or less desirable types.
- Phasing out Texas pet stores would replace a source of dogs that comes with a warranty and a reasonable return policy, with ones that generally do not offer these advantages.
- Sadly, a fair number of shelter dogs have behavior problems and some come from no-kill shelters where saving the life of a dog is more important than protecting a child from a dog with a known history of aggression.
- Phasing out pet stores from selling pets of the type the public wants, would simply push the marketplace underground where the source of dogs cannot be regulated or taxed and where health warranties for puppies do not exist. Take this case from Flower Mound, for example.

Please don't condemn whole categories of lawfully conducted businesses because some aren't living up to current law. In the United States, we are taught to judge individuals and groups by their conduct, not by their category.

Thank you for your time and attention!

Kelsea Abair
Employee
Aburey, TX

I am against the HB 870 bill.

Zachary Christman
Self Dish network installer
Aubrey, TX

I'm Against the bill

Patricia Franklin
The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club of Greater Houston and the Toy Spaniel Club of Greater Houston
HOUSTON, TX

I would like to state that I am opposed to HB 870 as regards to the breeding of cats and dogs by individuals in their homes. I belong to the AKC and to the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club of Greater Houston and the Toy Dog Club of Greater Houston. I participate in the showing of my Cavalier King Charles Spaniels as an owner/breeder. I do not mass produce puppies with intent to make a living off of the breeding of my dogs. My dogs are carefully selected for breeding after having them medically tested for genetic disease and no dog is bred who is found to have health issues. I breed my dogs in my home and raise them myself in my home under the guidelines of the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club's Code of Ethics. I am a preservation breeder and my dogs are kept clean, healthy and well tempered for the length of their lives. I do not believe that HB 870 will have any effect on those who do not breed ethically or are unkind to dogs. There are already enough laws in the great state of Texas that if enforced properly will cover the issue. Please do not continue to try and destroy the sport of pure bred dogs. We fill a need for service dogs, military dogs, police dogs and therapy dogs. By continuing to target preservation breeders you will eventually not be able to find healthy and well adjusted dogs available as pets or to fill the need for the jobs they were meant to do.

Paul Strandin
Self
Tyler, TX
No.

Taylor Trevino
self
Austin, TX

I urge legislators to support this bill. All living creatures deserve ethical and humane treatment.

Leticia Pena Martinez

North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce

San Antonio, TX

Action Requested: OPPOSE HB 870—Relating to source of dogs and cats sold by pet stores; providing civil penalty.

Chair Longoria, Vice Chair Vasut and Members of the House Business and Industry Committee,

The North San Antonio Chamber requests your opposition to HB 807. Protect small businesses and consumer choice. We understand issues related to the breeding and selling of animals in our communities may be complex. However, please consider the following:

- HB 870 is purportedly an effort to address the operational issues of one pet store in all of Texas, but the bill would effectively shut down all targeted and locally owned Texas pet stores that sell purpose bred dogs. No pet store in Texas Top 30 counties would be able to survive this bill's provisions. This legislation would effect businesses, jobs, careers and personal investments.
- HB 870 is based on a California legislative model that makes false, unverified, and uncorroborated assumptions: that professionally bred dogs sold by retail pet shops are raised in poor conditions. These claims undermine the federal pet dealer regulations that work to protect consumers and advance responsible breeding practices.
- Proponents of pet store restrictions imply that pet stores are the largest retail suppliers of pets to owners. However, according to the American Pet Product Association, only 4% of Americans obtained a pet from retail pet shops, while approximately 44% obtained pets from a retail rescue, traditional breed rescue, shelter, etc. The U.S. currently has a large market for "rescue pets", and with it, significant economic incentive for individuals or organizations who can avoid regulatory oversight by irresponsibly breeding or "flipping" pets directly to meet this demand.
- HB 870 restricts choice by compelling consumers and/or retailers to obtain pets solely from shelter or rescue distributors. By requiring pet sellers to showcase pets that come only from unregulated and random sources, HB 870 not only removes the most regulated and vetted source of pets from the market, it will exacerbate existing sourcing problems by creating a demand for dogs that are not subject to, and do not benefit from, animal welfare regulations or the health tests and reporting that result from those regulations.
- These bans do little to address any actual issues of cruelty or negligence. A law ensuring pet stores only offer pets from licensed, inspected, and responsible breeders will do that - a pet sale ban cannot. When people are forced obtain a pet that is not the right fit for their lifestyle, that pet is more likely to end up in a shelter.

Freedom of choice to select the right pet is the crucial first step to the success of long-term pet ownership. The North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce encourages the House Committee on Business and Industry to consider the intent of this bill and the impact on locally owned businesses and oppose HB 870.

jarvis dirden

Pet land katy

Katy, TX

I believe that banning legal puppy sales just isn't right it stops people for having the opportunity to add a member to they're forever family stops any chance of us helping people find they're best friend

Leticia Pena Martinez, SVP, Government Affairs & Advocacy
North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce
San Antonio, TX

The North San Antonio Chamber opposes HB 870.

HB 870 | Promotes the Same Business-Killing Regulations as IL, CA, & NY

X Animal rights activists like the Humane Society of the United States are using puppy bans to close down community pet stores in Texas; even those operating at the highest standards for health & animal welfare (17 local bans in Texas)

X Pet store bans send buyers to shelters and the internet where there is little-to-no accountability, reporting, or tracking of animals' health history.

X Pet store bans put stores out of business almost overnight and eliminate millions in local sales tax.

X Pet store bans do not put bad breeders out of business, rather, it supports their black-market operation. California is learning this the hard way.

X Not a single puppy mill has closed because of a ban.

X Animal rights activists are using bans to stop the private sale of all animals – even pets and service animals.