

RETAIL BANS UNDERMINE CONSUMER CHOICE

The AKC advocates for responsible dog owners and supports strong enforcement of local and state animal cruelty laws as well as the federal Animal Welfare Act, which provides consistent minimum standards of care, regulatory oversight and inspections of pet breeders, dealers, and other important players in the pet industry. The majority of breeders who register their dogs with AKC do not sell pets through pet stores; however, AKC's strong commitment to responsible dog ownership and the well-being of all dogs, and our expertise with both rescue and purpose-bred dogs compels us to weigh in on this important issue.

The AKC shares the concerns about the well-being of all pets. We are the world's largest purebred dog registry, our affiliated clubs operate America's largest purebred rescue network, and for over 130 years we have been proud to be the only non-profit purebred registry devoted to the health and well-being of all dogs. However, retail pet store restrictions will not accomplish these goals and lead to many consequences that harm dogs and future dog owners:

RESTRICTIONS ON CONSUMER PROTECTION

These bills remove existing consumer protections currently available to breeder and pet store customers. Shelters and rescues are not required to meet the same standards and cannot provide the same guarantees and recourses. Rather than getting a dog of a specific breed from a professional breeder subject to federal and state animal welfare laws, customers are getting a dog with unknown background, temperament and health history. Also, there are rescues and transports that unfortunately do not care as diligently for the animals. This is a significant concern that can impact both the public health and the health of animals.



RESTRICTIONS ON CONSUMER CHOICE

These bills limit the ability of residents to select pets in a responsible manner, based on the breed, health and temperament traits that they seek and make a good match for their lifestyle. Local residents may be wanting a quality purpose-bred pet and may not have access to a local breeder, do not want to be put on a long waiting list, etc. Instead, they may wish to purchase a dog from a regulated, licensed pet store where they can still get the consumer protections, the health history, and ongoing professional relationships they desire.



NO IMPACT ON CRUELTY OR NEGLIGENCE ISSUES

These proposals assume that all dogs sold at pet stores have been raised in poor conditions, which is simply not accurate. Instead, they remove one of the most regulated and vetted sources of pets from the market to favor unregulated pet distributors and randomly-sourced pets that lack oversight, and actually exacerbate issues associated with irresponsible actors in the retail and retail rescue pet industry. In addition, it is important to note that while these proposals are touted as a way to put an end to "puppy mills", fewer than 4 percent of pets purchased in the US come from pet shops.



Retail pet store bans and restrictions limit consumer choice and protection, while doing nothing to actually help dogs. The better solution is to consider broad consumer protection and cruelty laws that hold all accountable who sell or transport dogs, while allowing owners to choose the best pet for their family and lifestyle.

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To learn more, visit www.akcgr.org/akc/petchoice

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