

Dear Representative,

As a veterinarian and a lifelong Michigan resident, I urge you to vote against HB 5917 as the commercial of sale of animals by pet stores is a burden on those animals in addition to the communities in which those stores are located.

Supporters of this bill claim that pet stores provide the public with an option to obtain dogs without behavioral issues, yet a study published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* found that dogs sold commercially at pet stores were more likely to have behavioral problems than those obtained from non-commercial breeders¹. This is of little surprise as a responsible breeder vigorously screens potential homes for the animals in their care to ensure those homes can provide the animal with lifelong love and veterinary care. Such a breeder would never allow the impulse purchase of the animals they raise to anyone who qualifies for a pet store's most recent financing scheme while window shopping at the mall. Thus, it is no surprise that virtually every pet store that sells puppies turns to large-scale commercial breeding operations, also known as puppy mills, for their supply. The breeding dogs in these facilities live in abhorrent conditions, often without adequate shelter, veterinary care, or enrichment. In fact, a controlled study published in *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* found that dogs used as "breeding stock" in commercial breeding establishments were more likely to have both general health problems and behavioral issues, including fears and phobias². As such, it yields to reason that impressionable puppies sourced from such environments, frequently at extremely young ages, would have the seeds planted for long term behavioral issues when arriving at the closest strip mall.

Although I am a healthcare professional and not a politician, I will briefly make the following clear: As a citizen, I am disgusted that our state representatives would consider invalidating ordinances passed by local communities as it is their police departments, animal control units, and shelters that bear the financial and social burden of commercial animal sales by pet stores. For instance, the City of Warren spent over \$20,000 in a 2013 cruelty case involving just one pet store, Greenwood Pets and Plants. Furthermore, examples are abound of local law enforcement seizing dozens to hundreds of dogs in despicable conditions from supposed hobby breeders, with a recent January 2018 headline involving over 150 dogs from a property in Monroe County. Finally, with behavior and moving being major reasons animals are surrendered to local shelters, it is clear that establishments that depend on the impulse sale of animals prone to behavioral issues are not part of any solution towards reducing the large number that enter these shelters every year³.

Please follow other states, including Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, and Illinois, in rejecting any bill that makes it easier for pet stores to contribute to animal suffering while putting a strain on local resources.

Sincerely,



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¹ McMillan, F. D., Serpell, J. A., Duffy, D. L., Masaoud, E., & Dohoo, I. R. (2013). Differences in behavioral characteristics between dogs obtained as puppies from pet stores and those obtained from noncommercial breeders. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 242(10), 1359-1363.

² McMillan, F. D., Duffy, D. L., & Serpell, J. A. (2011). Mental health of dogs formerly used as 'breeding stock' in commercial breeding establishments. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 135(1), 86-94

³ Salman, M. D., Hutchison, J., Ruch-Gallie, R., Kogan, L., New Jr, J. C., Kass, P. H., & Scarlett, J. M. (2000). Behavioral reasons for relinquishment of dogs and cats to 12 shelters. *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*, 3(2), 93-10.