



## MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION FOR PURE BRED DOGS

Founded 1964

*"Promoting Responsible Dog Ownership"*

Committee: House Agriculture Committee  
In Support of: House Bills 5916/5917  
Date: May 16, 2018

I am Bob Darden, President of Michigan Association for Pure Bred Dogs (MAPBD). I am also on the Board of Directors of the Michigan Hunting Dog Federation and a member of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Companion Animal Advisory Committee.

Founded in 1964, and speaking on behalf of MAPBD, our organization advocates for the interest of our members, member clubs, and conscientious dog owners, for responsible dog laws, working to protect the rights of Michigan citizens to own, breed and otherwise enjoy their dogs.

Although "Pure Bred" is in our name our goal is to keep Michigan a dog-friendly state for all dogs and their owners.

MAPBD is asking you to support House Bills 5916 and 5917.

The discussion today should be how can we help ensure the health and welfare of random-sourced shelter dogs or purpose-bred dogs, matching the dog's disposition and temperament with the lifestyle of families wanting a canine companion.

No one condones animal abuse, substandard kennels or irresponsible breeders. In 2013 the USDA revised the definition of retail pet store under the Animal Welfare Act to address internet sales of dogs ensuring the health and humane treatment of pet animals sold sight unseen.

In the last legislative session, Michigan was proactive in amending MCL 287 the Pet Shops, Dog Pounds, and Animal Shelters Act defining large-scale dog breeding kennels, putting licensing and inspection of large scale dog breeding kennels under MDARD's regulations and enforcement.

House Bills 5916/5917 offers further clarity of MCL 287, holding pet shops accountable, encouraging the breeding and sale of healthy dogs.

All three strengthen regulations for the welfare of dogs, increasing transparency and accountability, offering greater consumer protection for a family bringing a dog into their home.

Shelters are doing a great job in placing dogs in homes. Euthanasia rates are dropping. Though shelters, alone, cannot hope to meet the need in placing healthy dogs in homes.

In 2015 Mississippi State University College of Veterinarian Medicine along with their Center for Social Science Research conducted a study. In that study it was found that:

- 5.5 million dogs entered shelters in 2015
- 2.6 million dogs were placed in homes from shelters in 2015
- 776,000 dogs were euthanized
- And about a similar number of dogs were transferred between one or another shelter, both in state and among the states

Given census figures of households, a 2015 survey determined that 44% of households owned a dog. In fact, the average was 1.6 dogs per household. Taking into account U.S. Census data, a dog's average lifespan and the consumer's dog purchasing behavior the determination was that in 2016 the nation-wide demand for a life-long canine companion was 8.1 million dogs. Given population projections, keeping the dog owning households at 44% that annual need has only increased.

When the numbers are analyzed, shelters simply cannot supply the demand for America's need for 8 million dogs a year.

If you were to include sourcing dogs from purpose-bred small home based breeders, which include many of the individuals in our organization, excluding USDA licensed kennels and licensed large scale dog breeding kennels, the consumer need for canine companions still could not be met.

In reading and viewing the prior testimony, it appears that to those that oppose these bills, the only source for dogs should be from shelters. Seemingly, if the dog did not come from a shelter, the dog had to have come from a puppy mill. That is not a fair representation.

We should be looking at ways to increase the options, not decrease the options that potential dog owners in Michigan have in selecting their dog. Options that included finding the ideal canine companion for a family's given circumstance whether the dog is from a licensed shelter, a licensed breeder, or a licensed pet shop. Empowering the consumer to choose the absolute best companion animal for their family's lifestyle will contribute to a life long relationship between the pet and their family.

Thank you,

Robert Darden  
President, MAPBD