



May 1, 2018

Michigan House Agriculture Committee

Support of HB 5916/ HB5917

Dear Representatives:

I am writing to you on behalf of the NAIA Trust, a broad-based animal welfare organization founded in 2001 to provide fact-based answers to complex and controversial issues regarding animals. We are dedicated to securing high standards of animal care and treatment; and to preserving the human-animal bond. Among our members in Michigan are pet owners, hobby breeders, rescuers and animal professionals, scientists and veterinarians.

At a time when pet ownership in this country is on the rise, pet owners enjoy a variety of sources to choose a pet from. Potential pet owners can choose to get their new pet from pet stores, directly from breeders, or from shelters and rescues. Pet stores are already regulated in the state of Michigan, and HB 5916/HB 5917 seek to further strengthen regulations to add more protection for the animals being sold so that pet buyers have high assurance that they are getting healthy pets.

HB5916 will ensure pet stores are buying from only qualified breeders, meaning USDA licensed breeders and/or MDARD licensed large-scale commercial breeders, or small home-based breeders. It will go a step further and require that stores only buy animals from USDA/MDARD breeders that are compliant and have had no issues or violations for 2 years. Pets will be required to be sold with a pet health certificate and microchip. Potential pet owners who choose to purchase from Michigan pet stores will have their selection of healthy pets from inspected and licensed sources and will also have recourse for any issues under Michigan Consumer Protections Laws. In short, unlike other commonly available dogs in the retail and rescue/shelter sectors<sup>1</sup>, pet store dogs are regulated from breeder to consumer. HB 5917 will protect these well-regulated and legal pet stores from being legislated out of business.

NAIA supports responsible legislation that holds sellers accountable and encourages the breeding and sale of sound and healthy animals. Potential pet owners in Michigan should have the right to choose what kind of pet they want to purchase, whether it be from a pet shop, breeder, or a shelter. HB 5916 and HB5917 will ensure that pet stores adhere to high standards of animal welfare and are one of the safest sources for consumers to purchase pets from.

Sincerely,

Sara Chisnell, NAIA Trust Legislative Director

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/investigations/dog-auction-rescue-groups-donations/?utm\\_term=.09c92dd5572a](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/investigations/dog-auction-rescue-groups-donations/?utm_term=.09c92dd5572a)