

Dear Senator Starr and Committee Members,

This is the written version of my testimony before your committee on May 2, 2024. Thank you for affording me the opportunity to speak.

My name is Pamela Krausz and I am the founder and executive director of Vermont Companion Animal Neutering (VT-CAN! Spay/Neuter Clinic). We opened 16 years ago and have altered over 45,000 cats and dogs. I have been involved in animal welfare in Vermont for over 30 years. I am also a board member of the Vermont Humane Federation (VHF) and am testifying on their behalf. VHF comprises the following local shelters and animal welfare organizations:

- Central Vermont Humane Society (Washington & Orange)
- Franklin County Animal Rescue (Franklin)
- Homeward Bound, Addison County's Humane Society (Addison)
- Humane Society of Chittenden County (Chittenden & Grand Isle)
- Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society (Windsor)
- North Country Animal League (Lamoille)
- Rutland County Humane Society (Rutland)
- Springfield Humane Society (Windsor)
- Windham County Humane Society (Windham)
- HEART Wildlife Removal
- Good Karma Rescue
- Pawsitive Pantry
- Protect Our Wildlife
- Spay ASAP
- Vermont Disaster Animal Response Team
- VT-CAN! Spay/Neuter Clinic

The Vermont Humane Federation supports the amendment that would prevent new pet stores from selling puppies and kittens. We want Vermont to be proactive and prevent problems before they start. The impetus and urgency for this to pass now is because New York, which shares a large border with Vermont, just passed legislation that prohibits pet stores from selling canines and felines. If Vermont is not proactive, these stores could see an opening and move into Vermont, causing issues for pet owners here. While regulations exist, enforcement is difficult and costly. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAF) is already overworked and understaffed and does not need this added burden.

Vermont has responsible breeders who offer residents a choice of purebred dogs and cats. The parents are located on-site and people interested in purchasing a puppy or kitten are able to visit and see the housing conditions. Ethical breeders love their pets and consider them part of the family. They want the offspring to go into good, caring homes. This type of breeder does

not sell to pet stores. The purebred animals that end up in pet stores often come from puppy mills that view animals as a revenue source and nothing more.

The Vermont Humane Federation loves puppies and kittens and we recognize the need for ethically sourced puppies for residents wanting to add to their family. We support this type of breeding and our responsible, local, breeders. What we do not support is the puppy mill business that is rampant across the country and is a primary source for pet stores that sell animals.

Bordering states passed regulations about transporting companion animals in from other states and Vermont did not. We are now, with great difficulty, dealing with the repercussions and seeing more and more unregulated, uneducated, under-resourced rescues across Vermont with often dire consequences such as sick and behaviorally challenged pets. We do not want to see the same thing happen with pet stores in Vermont. This legislation will prevent this from happening and keep us from dealing with the negative repercussions in the future.

The fiscally and ethically prudent thing to do is to pass this legislation now and prevent costly measures in the future including further burdening VAAF and law enforcement agencies, which are already stretched thin.