

# SUPPORT H.567: VERMONT'S HUMANE PET STORE BILL



**BACKGROUND:** Selling puppies and kittens in pet store raises serious animal welfare and consumer protection issues. By prohibiting *additional* pet stores from selling dogs and cats, lawmakers can protect animals and consumers without impacting existing puppy stores.

- Seven states and over 480 localities prohibit the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores. New York, Maryland, California & Illinois prohibit *all* pet stores from selling puppies, while Maine, Oregon & Washington allow existing stores to continue selling puppies.
- H.567 is modeled after Maine's humane pet store law that was enacted in 2019.
- Only one known pet store currently sells puppies in the state, but we are at risk of bad actors moving in as other nearby states are prohibiting this practice altogether. (New York's law will impact 50+ stores and goes into effect in late 2024; Massachusetts and New Hampshire are considering similar legislation).

## THE PROBLEM WITH PUPPY-SELLING PET STORES

Puppy-selling pet stores pose numerous, unique issues for animals and consumers, including:

- Cruel puppy mills: Public records show that most pet store puppies come from large-scale, inhumane commercial breeders or brokers, many with terrible animal welfare records. Federal oversight of the commercial breeding industry is severely lacking. See [USDA fact sheet](#) for more information.
- Grueling transport: Pet store puppies are taken from their mothers and littermates at just 8 weeks old, crammed into cages with other stressed and sick puppies, and trucked across the country in urine and feces-filled cages. Puppies are treated as mere products.
- Misleading sales tactics: Pet stores often sell puppies for thousands of dollars with false promises of humane, regulated breeders and healthy, socialized puppies when this is rarely true.
- Sick puppies: The HSUS, government agencies, and online platforms receive a constant stream of complaints from consumers with sick, dying or newly deceased pet store puppies and high veterinary bills.
- Predatory lending: Pet stores often push financing options on customers with promises of low or no interest rates, but consumers have ended up with interest rates as high as 198%.
- Zoonotic disease: The [American Medical Association](#) and the CDC have warned of the health risks posed by pet store puppies, noting that antibiotic-resistant infections continue to cause serious illness to people.

## THE HUMANE ALTERNATIVE

This law will drive the market towards pet sources and businesses that are better for animals and families.

- Residents will continue to obtain the pet of their choice from shelters, rescues or [responsible breeders](#) who sell directly to the public, never through third parties.
- There are a wide range of purebred puppies available directly from breeders in our state. Popular mixed breeders are also available directly from breeders.
- The massive retail pet industry (\$136 billion and counting) is dominated by the sale of pet food and products and in-demand pet-related services, with consumers spending more than ever on their pets. No store needs to sell puppies. With that said, our one puppy store may continue to do.