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**SENATE BILL 6221**

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**State of Washington**

**66th Legislature**

**2020 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Stanford, Kuderer, and Rolfes

Prefiled 01/10/20. Read first time 01/13/20. Referred to Committee on Labor & Commerce.

1 AN ACT Relating to consumer protection with respect to the sale  
2 and adoption of dogs and cats; adding a new section to chapter 16.52  
3 RCW; creating a new section; and prescribing penalties.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

6 (1) Responsible and reputable breeders, animal care and control  
7 agencies, and animal rescue groups work diligently to place dogs and  
8 cats in homes that offer a lifetime of care, safety, and  
9 companionship. These entities strive to create a good match between  
10 the animals they are selling or offering for adoption, and  
11 prospective owners, helping to keep discarded animals from burdening  
12 local shelters.

13 (2) Nearly all retail pet stores in Washington state choose not  
14 to sell dogs and cats, with only a few retail pet stores continuing  
15 this practice. Reputable retail pet stores, both chains and  
16 independent stores, thrive by selling pet-related products and  
17 services.

18 (3) The vast majority of dogs and cats sold at retail pet stores  
19 come from large-scale breeding facilities. These breeding facilities  
20 have little to no regulatory oversight and, at best, adhere to bare-

1 bones survival standards for the breeding animals. They are what are  
2 commonly referred to as "puppy mills."

3 (4) To facilitate the adoption of dogs and cats needing homes,  
4 retail pet stores are encouraged to collaborate with qualified animal  
5 care and control agencies and animal rescue groups to provide a  
6 location for those organizations to showcase animals for adoption.

7 (5) Animal care and control agencies and animal rescue groups  
8 that showcase dogs and cats for adoption at retail pet stores should  
9 meet minimum performance standards to help ensure a good match  
10 between the animal and the person intending to adopt a dog or cat.  
11 This not only protects consumers, it also ensures that dogs and cats  
12 do not end up abandoned or surrendered, where the burden of care then  
13 falls to local communities and shelters.

14 (6) Responsible and reputable breeders of dogs and cats in  
15 Washington state should continue to sell dogs and cats directly to  
16 prospective owners; these reputable businesses have no need for a pet  
17 store front as an intermediary.

18 (7) For the reasons stated in this section, retail pet stores  
19 should discontinue sales of dogs and cats to the public, which will  
20 serve to protect consumer interests, keep unwanted animals out of  
21 local shelters, and reduce animal cruelty associated with "puppy  
22 mills."

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 16.52  
24 RCW to read as follows:

25 (1) A retail pet store may not sell or offer for sale any dog or  
26 cat.

27 (2) A retail pet store may collaborate only with an animal care  
28 and control agency or animal rescue group, as those terms are defined  
29 in RCW 82.04.040, to offer space for these entities to showcase  
30 adoptable dogs or cats. However, the retail pet store may not have  
31 any ownership interest in the animals offered for adoption and may  
32 not receive a fee for providing space for the adoption of any of the  
33 animals.

34 (3) For any dog or cat made available at a retail pet store for  
35 adoption and to help facilitate the successful adoption of a dog or  
36 cat needing a home, the animal care and control agency or animal  
37 rescue group shall, at a minimum:

38 (a) Post and maintain a sign on each dog's and cat's cage or  
39 enclosure or have written documentation immediately available to the

1 public that identifies the name and address of the animal care and  
2 control agency or animal rescue group that is making the dog or cat  
3 available for adoption;

4 (b) Ensure adoptable dogs and cats receive necessary veterinary  
5 examinations, vaccinations, and appropriate medical treatment before  
6 placing them with persons seeking to adopt the dog or cat, and  
7 identify known, ongoing veterinary medical needs;

8 (c) Determine a suitable match for the person seeking to adopt a  
9 dog or cat, including requiring a person seeking to adopt a dog or  
10 cat to respond to a questionnaire to identify animals that are best  
11 matched to the person's needs, expectations, and circumstances;

12 (d) Require a person intending to adopt a dog or cat to sign an  
13 adoption contract specifying the expectations for returning the dog  
14 or cat to the animal care and control agency or animal rescue group  
15 or another designated animal care organization if the person, for any  
16 reason, cannot keep or properly care for the dog or cat;

17 (e) Provide the most current documentation of the animal's known  
18 health, medical conditions, vaccination record, behavioral history,  
19 any temperament testing performed, and available microchip  
20 information to the person adopting the animal at the time the animal  
21 is adopted; and

22 (f) Ensure that the dog or cat is spayed or neutered before being  
23 released to the person adopting the animal.

24 (4) A retail pet store that violates this section is subject to a  
25 class 1 civil infraction under RCW 7.80.120, for its first violation.  
26 Second and subsequent violations by a retail pet store are subject to  
27 a monetary penalty of five hundred dollars. Each dog or cat offered  
28 for sale or sold by a retail pet store in violation of subsection (1)  
29 of this section, or offered for adoption or released for adoption by  
30 a retail pet store in violation of subsection (2) of this section,  
31 constitutes a separate violation.

32 (5) For the purposes of this section "retail pet store" means a  
33 for-profit place of business open to the public that offers pet  
34 supplies or pets for sale. A person who offers for sale, directly to  
35 the public, only animals that the person bred and raised, is not  
36 considered a "retail pet store."

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