

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1424

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As of March 23, 2021

**Title:** An act relating to consumer protection with respect to the sale of dogs and cats.

**Brief Description:** Concerning consumer protection with respect to the sale of dogs and cats.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Consumer Protection & Business (originally sponsored by Representatives Walen, Ybarra, Springer, Simmons, Ramel and Berg).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/7/21, 68-30.

**Committee Activity:** Business, Financial Services & Trade: 3/23/21.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits a retail pet store from selling a cat.
- Prohibits a retail pet store from selling or offering to sell a dog unless the pet store sold or offered for sale any dog prior to the effective date of the act.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS, FINANCIAL SERVICES & TRADE

**Staff:** Kellee Gunn (786-7429)

**Background:** There are many local, state, and federal laws governing buying, selling, and keeping animals. Recently enacted state laws include those that limit leasing a dog or cat, revise or establish certain penalties for animal cruelty, clarify what animal cruelty includes, and limit dog breeding practices.

At the federal level, several laws further govern the rights of animals. Most relevant to buying and selling animals is the Animal Welfare Act (act) which was enacted in 1966, and most recently amended in 2013. The act protects animals kept in zoos, laboratories, and those commercially bred and sold. The United States Department of Agriculture enforces

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the act and regulates household pets.

On the local level, some counties and cities impose regulations on the sale of animals intended as pets, such as imposing licensing requirements on retail pet stores and prohibiting the sale of animals in public places.

**Summary of Bill:** A retail pet store may not sell or offer to sell any cat. A retail pet store may not sell or offer to sell a dog unless the retail pet store sold or offered to sell any dog prior to the effective date of this legislation.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This is a consumer protection bill and came out of negotiations with stakeholders over the interim. Consumers in Washington demand transparency in these transactions. Under our current laws, unlawful dog breeders may still sell dogs to consumers. Through our work at the local animal shelter we saw what a humane pet sale looks like. We want pet sales to be mindful of animal and consumer well-being. This bill is a crucial step to ensure humane pet sales. Our city recently passed an ordinance banning pet sales. When families deal with the death of a puppy, it can be devastating. The state has a problem with unwanted puppies and kittens from mills.

We do not want to create more barriers for those who need to get dogs for emotional support animals. There could have been more work done on this bill. There needs to be more regulation on this industry. I bought a puppy from a Puppyland pet store in another state and was provided certification of its pure breed. The puppy was not pure bred and had issues. The breeder which the puppy was sourced from was on a puppy mill list. Please prevent this from happening again.

CON: My store has been around since 1978 and I have eight full and part-time employees. I sell puppies and kittens along with other pet store supplies. We purchase from local private breeders. Though this bill exempts current businesses, it is one step closer to banning stores like mine. Clark County does annual inspections on pet stores and I have never had a single violation based on that county code.

We should stop puppy mills. By enforcing a ban on retail pet stores however, Internet sales will go up. These sales are much more difficult to enforce than the sales happening at a physical store. We need transparency. Where are rescue animals coming from? A good regulation also needs to also look at adoptions. We need to make sure everyone is on the

same page. Please include all stakeholders in the future bill discussions.

**OTHER:** We own two pet retail stores in Washington and are very involved with our breeders. When visiting breeders, we look for things like veterinary and exercise programs. There is a process in place to ensure the breeders provide and deliver healthy puppies. The goal of this bill is not to regulate, but to shut down retail pet stores. This bill means lost jobs and revenue. We are small business and we care about our dogs and customers. We must use out of state breeders as Washington State has a limited number of licensed breeders, and the state enforces few requirements on breeders.

I oppose this bill as currently written. I own a kennel in Iowa. We are USDA and state licensed and are subject to strict rules and guidelines including unannounced inspections.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Amy Walen, Prime Sponsor; Ava Finn, Seattle Humane Volunteer; Novia Liu, Seattle Humane Volunteer; Lisa Parshley, City of Olympia Councilmember; Darci Duker; Paula Sardinias, Puppyland/Puppyworld, FMSGs; Carolynn Zimmers, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine; Brooke Davies, Pasado's Safe Haven; Ashly Dale, Bailing Out Benji, Director of Operations; Dan Paul, Washington State Director, The Humane Society of the United States.

CON: Larry Zimmer, Alley Cat Pet Center; Debbie Goodrich, Parrot Ambassadors.

OTHER: Kayla Kerr; Justin Kerr, Puppyland; Terisa Steiber, Rockytop Kennels.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.