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**HOUSE BILL 1424**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Berg, Walen, Simmons, Kloba, Street, Taylor, Alvarado, Bateman, Stonier, Paul, Fosse, Macri, Reed, Berry, Senn, Duerr, Riccelli, Doglio, Callan, Peterson, Fitzgibbon, Stearns, Ortiz-Self, Goodman, Thai, Springer, Gregerson, Ramel, Bergquist, and Pollet

Read first time 01/18/23. Referred to Committee on Consumer Protection & Business.

1 AN ACT Relating to consumer protection with respect to the sale  
2 and adoption of dogs and cats; amending RCW 16.52.360; adding a new  
3 section to chapter 63.10 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 63.14  
4 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 31.04 RCW; creating a new  
5 section; and prescribing penalties.

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

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

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

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

20 (3) The vast majority of dogs and cats sold at retail pet stores  
21 come from large-scale breeding facilities. These breeding facilities

1 have little to no regulatory oversight and, at best, adhere to bare-  
2 bones survival standards for the breeding animals. They are what are  
3 commonly referred to as "puppy mills."

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

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

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

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

24 **Sec. 2.** RCW 16.52.360 and 2021 c 76 s 1 are each amended to read  
25 as follows:

26 (1) (~~Except as provided in this section, a~~) A retail pet store  
27 may not sell or offer for sale any dog or cat.

28 (2) A retail pet store (~~that sold or offered for sale any dog~~  
29 ~~prior to July 25, 2021, may sell or offer for sale a dog~~) may  
30 collaborate only with an animal care and control agency or animal  
31 rescue group, as those terms are defined in RCW 82.04.040, to offer  
32 space for these entities to showcase adoptable dogs or cats. However,  
33 the retail pet store may not have any ownership interest in the  
34 animals offered for adoption and may not receive a fee for providing  
35 space for the adoption of any of the animals.

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

1 (a) Post and maintain a sign on each dog's and cat's cage or  
2 enclosure or have written documentation immediately available to the  
3 public that identifies the name and address of the animal care and  
4 control agency or animal rescue group that is making the dog or cat  
5 available for adoption;

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

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

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

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

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

26 (4) A retail pet store that violates this section is subject to a  
27 class 1 civil infraction under RCW 7.80.120, for its first violation.  
28 Second and subsequent violations by a retail pet store are subject to  
29 a monetary penalty of \$500. Each dog or cat offered for sale or sold  
30 by a retail pet store in violation of subsection (1) of this section,  
31 or offered for adoption or released for adoption by a retail pet  
32 store in violation of subsection (2) of this section, constitutes a  
33 separate violation.

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

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    A new section is added to chapter 63.10  
2 RCW to read as follows:

3        A lessor shall not finance a consumer lease for the purchase of a  
4 dog or cat. A lease contract entered into on or after the effective  
5 date of this section for the purchase of a dog or cat is void and  
6 unenforceable and the lessor shall have no right to collect, receive,  
7 or retain any principal, interest, or charges related to the lease  
8 contract.

9        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 4.**    A new section is added to chapter 63.14  
10 RCW to read as follows:

11       A retail installment transaction entered into on or after the  
12 effective date of this section for the purchase of a dog or cat is  
13 void and unenforceable and the retail seller shall have no right to  
14 collect, receive, or retain any principal, interest, or charges  
15 related to the retail installment transaction.

16       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 5.**    A new section is added to chapter 31.04  
17 RCW to read as follows:

18       A licensee shall not finance or make a loan for the purchase of a  
19 dog or cat. A loan entered into on or after the effective date of  
20 this section for the purchase of a dog or cat is void and  
21 unenforceable and the licensee shall have no right to collect,  
22 receive, or retain any principal, interest, or charges related to the  
23 loan.

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