

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 26-1011. This important legislation will prohibit the retail sale of dogs and cats through pet stores and brokers in Colorado while preserving adoption through shelters and rescues and allowing direct sales from responsible breeders. This bill addresses a well-documented animal welfare and consumer protection issue and represents a necessary step toward ending the commercial puppy mill pipeline.

Commercial puppy mills are large-scale breeding facilities that prioritize profit over animal welfare. Dogs in these facilities are often confined to overcrowded cages, denied adequate veterinary care, and subjected to repeated breeding that results in serious medical and behavioral problems. Retail pet stores and brokers provide a critical sales outlet that allows these operations to remain profitable while concealing the origin and conditions in which animals are bred. Cutting off this retail pipeline is one of the most effective ways to reduce the demand that sustains these inhumane operations.

Retail pet sales also pose significant risks to Colorado consumers. Families often purchase puppies without full transparency regarding their origin, health, or genetic background, resulting in costly veterinary care, emotional distress, and financial hardship. By eliminating retail sales while preserving responsible breeder and adoption pathways, House Bill 26-1011 protects consumers while promoting ethical and transparent pet acquisition.

Colorado communities have already recognized the importance of addressing this issue. Numerous municipalities have enacted local restrictions on retail pet sales, reflecting strong public support for policies that protect animals and consumers. House Bill 26-1011 would establish consistent statewide protections and ensure that Colorado does not continue to serve as a destination for commercially bred animals from large-scale breeding operations.

My support for this bill is also grounded in firsthand experience. As a foster caregiver, I have worked directly with vulnerable cats and kittens, including neonates, undersocialized and semi-feral cats, and others requiring intensive care and rehabilitation. I have provided medical support, socialization, and safe housing to animals that would otherwise have little chance of survival or adoption (36 last year alone). I have also participated in trap-neuter-return efforts to prevent future suffering and reduce overpopulation (24 in 2025).

Through this work, I have seen firsthand the consequences of overbreeding and the strain it places on shelters, rescues, and communities. Every animal sold through a commercial retail pipeline contributes to the broader overpopulation crisis, increasing the number of animals in shelters and placing additional pressure on already limited resources. Preventing irresponsible breeding and retail sales is essential to reducing this burden and improving outcomes for animals statewide.

House Bill 26-1011 represents a balanced, humane, and effective solution. It does not prohibit responsible breeding or pet ownership. Instead, it targets the commercial retail system that enables large-scale breeding operations while preserving ethical pathways for acquiring companion animals.

Passing this bill will:

- Reduce animal suffering
- Protect Colorado consumers
- Support shelters and rescues
- Promote responsible breeding practices
- Reduce shelter overcrowding and resource strain
- Align Colorado with proven, humane public policy

Colorado has long been a leader in animal welfare. Passing House Bill 26-1011 will strengthen consumer protections, reduce animal suffering, and

ensure a more humane and responsible system for companion animals in our state.

I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 26-1011.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Gigantiello

kathryn.gigantiello@jeffco.k12.co.us

## **References**

1. Colorado General Assembly. House Bill 26-1011: Concerning the transfer of pet animals. 2026.
2. Animal Rights Coalition. Puppy Mills Fact Sheet. 2025.
3. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Ending Retail Puppy Sales and Standing Against Puppy Mill Cruelty.
4. Best Friends Animal Society. Combating Puppy Mills: Ending the Puppy Mill Pipeline.
5. Humane World for Animals. The Puppy Mill Pipeline and Retail Pet Sales in the United States.



February 23, 2026

**RE: HB26-1011 – Ban on the Sale of Cats, Dogs and Rabbits**

Dear Chairperson McCormick and members of the House **Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources**

As the advocacy voice of the responsible pet care community, the Pet Advocacy Network represents the interests and expertise of retailers, companion animal suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, pet owners, and others involved in the many aspects of pet care across the United States. Our association promotes animal well-being and responsible pet ownership, fosters environmental stewardship, and ensures healthy pets' availability through our local, state, and federal work. In addition, we routinely advocate for legislative and regulatory proposals to protect the health, safety, and availability of companion animals.

On behalf of the responsible pet care community, we ask that you **vote NO on House Bill 26-1011**, an act that would ban the sale of dogs and cats in licensed and regulated retail pet stores.

Pet stores are subject to stringent regulations, including regular inspections, licensing requirements, and adherence to animal welfare standards. These regulations ensure that the animals are healthy, well-cared for, and sold with a guarantee that protects the consumer. Families who purchase pets from regulated pet stores benefit from transparency and accountability, knowing that they are acquiring their new companions from a trustworthy and professional source.

Pet stores provide valuable consumer education on pet care, ensuring that new pet owners are well-informed and prepared to take on the responsibilities of pet ownership. This consumer protection exists only for animals that come from regulated pet stores — giving families documented sourcing information, required health disclosures, veterinary records, and a licensed entity accountable to the Colorado Department of Agriculture if problems arise. By contrast, animals obtained through shelters and rescues - who play an important and critical role - can and do become ill, may contract contagious diseases while housed in congregate environments, and sometimes have congenital disorders that are discovered only after adoption — yet those placements often lack the same standardized retail disclosures and enforceable post-purchase protections.

CBS News investigations have highlighted serious regulatory concerns within portions of the rescue system, including the large-scale importation of puppies into Colorado, include over 37,000 alone in 2021 and links between interstate importing and disease outbreaks such as distemper and even a rabies exposure case that required widespread public health intervention.<sup>1</sup> Notably, PACFA Program Section Chief Nick Fisher has emphasized that regulators receive complaints “every week” about sick dogs that were adopted, underscoring that these issues are not isolated. He has also warned about the risks associated with insufficient health documentation and the challenges regulators face when animals are transported across

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<sup>1</sup> [www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/colorado-pet-rescues-millions-dollars-trafficking-puppies-investigation-millions/](https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/colorado-pet-rescues-millions-dollars-trafficking-puppies-investigation-millions/)

state lines without consistent traceability and oversight. Fisher’s comments make clear that disease risk and post-adoption illness are recurring enforcement realities — not hypothetical concerns.

The contrast is significant: licensed pet stores operating under Colorado’s Pet Animal Care and Facilities Act (PACFA) are subject to mandatory licensure, routine inspections, documented sourcing requirements, sanitation and housing standards, veterinary care protocols, and clear consumer disclosure laws. Rescues and shelters, while serving an important role in rehoming animals, are often held to a different and in some respects lower regulatory standard — particularly regarding transaction transparency, traceability, and consistent enforcement oversight. Colorado pet stores are therefore among the most highly regulated sources for pets in the state. Rather than eliminating this transparent and accountable sector through a ban, policymakers should focus on strengthening and harmonizing standards across all animal sources to better protect animal welfare, public health, and Colorado families.<sup>2</sup>

While well-intentioned, retail pet sale bans will not stop bad breeders who are unregulated, unlicensed, and are not held accountable to any animal care standards.

In California, which has a statewide ban, the unregulated, underground puppy market has now thrived. A 2024 investigation by The Los Angeles Times revealed that thousands of these puppies, often purchased online, at rest stops or from those claiming to be local “hobby breeders”, come from breeders that the well-regulated pet stores do not, and cannot work with. These puppies are coming from breeders with animal welfare violations including severe neglect, overcrowding, and poor veterinary care. In one instance, puppies infected with parvovirus were knowingly transported without treatment, endangering both the puppies and their eventual owners.

Veterinarians in California, citing the statewide ban, saw increase in consumers purchasing sick dogs from unregulated sources shortly after the state banned the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits at pet stores, and without the consumer protection that came with purchasing a pet from a regulated pet store, families were left paying enormous veterinary bills, and in some cases, families never received the dog they paid for.<sup>3</sup>

Colorado already has a strong, structured regulatory system governing pet stores — one that provides far greater transparency, consumer protection, and enforceable welfare standards than most other sources of companion animals. Under the Pet Animal Care and Facilities Act (PACFA), pet stores must be licensed, inspected, meet detailed care and housing standards, maintain accurate records of animal sourcing and health, provide required disclosures to buyers, and are accountable to the Colorado Department of Agriculture if they fail to meet those standards.

In contrast, many shelters and rescues operate with *less consistent oversight*, particularly around animal origin traceability and health testing — a gap that has had real consequences. For example, Colorado regulators have reported cases of dogs imported by some rescues being infected with rabies — a disease believed eradicated in the U.S. — resulting in dozens of people needing post-exposure treatment and multiple dogs being euthanized. PACFA’s enforcement chief, Nick Fisher, has noted that he *receives*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/puppy-importing-leading-to-disease-outbreaks-in-colorado/>

<sup>3</sup> Puppy dies four hours after SD family buys it, Vets say new law may be part of the problem, <https://www.10news.com/news/team-10/puppy-dies-four-hours-after-sd-family-buys-it-vets-say-new-law-may-be-part-of-the-problem>

*complaints every week about sick dogs that were adopted from facilities that are not subject to the same level of regulatory scrutiny, and that disease exposures and reporting gaps are not unusual.*<sup>4</sup>

Colorado state law has been strong in ensuring that these substandard breeders cannot work with anyone in the state, however, as we have seen in other states and localities where these bans have been imposed, bad breeders and illegal backyard breeders end up thriving

Enforcement—not prohibition—is the appropriate policy solution. If the concern is bad actors, Colorado law already provides the appropriate tools:

- Inspections to identify violations
- Penalties and license revocation to remove noncompliant operators
- Authority to seize animals when welfare is at risk

House Bill 26-1011 does not strengthen these tools. It does not add inspectors, raise care standards, close enforcement gaps, or improve breeder oversight. Instead, it removes regulated pet stores from the system entirely, while leaving unregulated and difficult-to-police channels untouched.

As demonstrated in other states, eliminating licensed pet stores does not stop irresponsible breeding—it pushes sales underground, increases reliance on online transactions, fuels puppy scams, and reduces animal welfare outcomes by removing regulated, inspectable points of sale.

Pet stores and the licensed, responsible breeders they work with are a highly regulated, best-in-class source of pets that have been raised under federal and state care standards and are inspected regularly, provided veterinary exams, and keep detailed records of the condition and care of their animals:

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) established and enforces humane care standards under the federal government's Animal Welfare Act that regulate the transportation, purchase, sale, housing, care, handling, and treatment of animals for use as pets.
- Breeders with five or more breeding females not USDA-licensed, are prohibited from selling to pet stores.
- USDA-licensed breeders are routinely inspected to ensure they follow humane standards for veterinary care, shelter, food, and clean water.
- State laws regarding animal care and warranties also regulate pet stores. They must keep records related to health, veterinary care, and the source of the animals they sell.

Rather than imposing a ban that would eliminate regulated pet stores and push consumers toward less transparent and less protected channels, Colorado should use the upcoming PACFA sunset review as an opportunity to strengthen regulation across all animal sources — including shelters and rescues — to enhance health safeguards, traceability, and accountability. A thoughtful regulatory update would improve

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/colorado-regulators-worried-imported-dogs-infected-disease-rabies-pet-adoption-eradicated/>



animal welfare and consumer protection without depriving families of the protections that well-regulated pet stores provide, and without inadvertently creating greater risks by driving demand into poorly regulated markets.

Beyond the legal requirements, our members in Colorado feel a responsibility for the animals themselves. They work with families to find the ideal pets for their situations because that is the best way to ensure successful lifelong pet relationships and keep pets from being surrendered to shelters and rescues. These local businesses are committed to the health, safety, and well-being of the animals they provide for families.

House Bill 26-1011 is not only unnecessary—it is counterproductive. Colorado already has a strong, enforceable regulatory framework that governs pet stores and breeders alike. Shutting down licensed, inspected pet stores will not stop bad breeders; it will weaken oversight, reduce transparency, and harm both animals and consumers. We respectfully urge the Committee to vote NO on House Bill 26-1011 and instead work collaboratively to build on Colorado’s existing animal welfare protections.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alyssa Miller-Hurley  
Vice President of Government Affairs

1615 Duke Street, Suite 100  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
202.452.1525 | [info@petadvocacy.org](mailto:info@petadvocacy.org)  
[Petadvocacy.org](http://Petadvocacy.org)



## Written Testimony in Opposition to Colorado House Bill 26-1011

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Angie Schaaf**, and together with my husband, **Casey Schaaf**, I am a co-owner of **Nebraskaland Pets**, a small, responsible dog-breeding and brokerage business located in **north central Nebraska**. We respectfully submit this written testimony in opposition to **House Bill 26-1011**.

Nebraskaland Pets operates with a strong commitment to animal welfare, transparency, and regulatory compliance. We hold a **PACFA license authorizing the lawful transport of puppies into the State of Colorado**, and we also hold a **State of Nebraska license** governing our operations. In addition, we are federally licensed as **breeders and brokers**. We fully comply with all applicable federal, state, and interstate requirements, including veterinary health standards, recordkeeping, consumer disclosures, and humane handling and transport protocols. These regulatory frameworks exist to protect animals and consumers alike, and we take those responsibilities seriously.

In Nebraska, we are **one of only three small, federally licensed brokers** operating in the state. This distinction is important because brokers are already subject to heightened scrutiny, oversight, and compliance requirements under both federal and state law. The number of licensed brokers is extremely limited, and those who remain in operation do so because they meet rigorous regulatory standards. Businesses like ours are not high-volume or anonymous middlemen; we are small, transparent operators who are accountable to regulators and consumers.

An important and often misunderstood role of a licensed broker is to serve as an **additional safeguard** in the animal-placement process. A broker's responsibility is not merely to transport animals, but to ensure that puppies entering the state come **only from responsible breeders**. We personally evaluate and verify the breeders we work with, confirming that they meet standards for animal care, housing, veterinary oversight, and ethical breeding practices. Breeders who do not meet these expectations are not used. This hands-on verification provides an added layer of accountability and consumer protection beyond what would exist in an unregulated or direct-to-consumer marketplace.

It is also important to note that if a kennel is cited for violations during inspection, that can gravely affect its ability to sell puppies to licensed pet stores. Because of this, it is imperative that inspections remain 100 percent compliant. Even minor citations can jeopardize relationships with retail partners and limit lawful placement options. This creates strong accountability incentives within the regulated system and reinforces the importance of maintaining clean, inspection-ready operations at all times.

The puppies we raise and broker are **placed with families through licensed pet stores**, which provides further layers of oversight, documentation, and traceability. This placement model ensures that health records, veterinary certifications, and consumer disclosures are reviewed at multiple points—from breeder, to broker, to retailer—before a puppy is placed with a family. This structure promotes transparency and responsible placement while allowing regulators to monitor compliance throughout the process.

House Bill 26-1011 would impose restrictions that disproportionately impact responsible, regulated businesses like ours—those already operating under multiple layers of oversight. Rather than targeting irresponsible or illegal actors, this bill limits lawful, regulated pathways for ethical breeders and brokers who are already subject to inspection, enforcement, and licensing.

By restricting where and how animals may be sold, House Bill 26-1011 risks driving consumer demand out of state or into underground, unregulated markets. When lawful, licensed options are limited or eliminated,

demand does not disappear—it shifts to channels with little or no oversight. We respectfully encourage the committee to research the experience of **California**, where similar restrictive policies have resulted in increased underground sales, unregulated online transactions, and reduced transparency, ultimately making enforcement more difficult and weakening animal-welfare and consumer protections rather than strengthening them.

Restricting regulated commerce also results in the loss of Colorado sales-tax revenue, licensing fees, and regulatory oversight. PACFA already provides a strong framework for accountability and enforcement. Limiting participation by licensed businesses undermines that framework and reduces transparency rather than improving outcomes.

Families deserve the right to choose where their next family member comes from. Not every family is able or willing to adopt from a shelter or rescue, and that choice should be respected. Many families seek specific breeds, predictable temperaments, or non-shedding and allergy-friendly dogs due to health, lifestyle, or family considerations. Responsible breeders and regulated brokers—working in partnership with licensed pet stores—provide these options in a transparent and lawful manner.

Effective animal-welfare policy should focus on identifying and enforcing penalties against truly irresponsible operators—not imposing broad restrictions that treat ethical, compliant businesses the same as bad actors. As PACFA-licensed transporters, Nebraska-licensed operators, and one of only three small licensed brokers in Nebraska, we believe existing regulatory systems should be strengthened and enforced, not bypassed or rendered ineffective.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to oppose **House Bill 26-1011** and instead pursue targeted, enforceable policies that genuinely protect animals, consumers, and responsible businesses.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Angie Schaaf & Casey Schaaf**  
Co-Owners, **Nebraskaland Pets**  
North Central Nebraska  
PACFA-Licensed Animal Transporters  
State of Nebraska-Licensed Operators  
Federally Licensed Breeders and Brokers (Nebraska)

**House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources**

02/23/2026 01:30 PM

**HB26-1011 Transfers of Certain Pet Animals**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Sandra Fiyak Against Pet City</p>	<p>Good morning my name is Sandra. I fully support animal welfare, but I oppose legislation HB26-1011 that removes consumer choice and eliminates responsible breeders and regulated businesses. Shelters and rescues should be options “ not the only options. As everyone is different. Please kill this bill and protect ethical dog care and transparency. I feel strongly for this as an owner of two wonderful fur babies. Hiei, my sweet Pug and Layla, my beautiful poodle mix. Both have kept me happy and help me battle my depression, anxiety and other mental health challenges for years. Layla, I bought from a business where I was fully informed of where she came from, her family background, vaccination history and breeder information/ethical conditions of the breeder facility. Making it clear they take into consideration high standards for their animals health, not only the puppies but the parents too. Hiei, I took into my care at a young ago from an inadequate home. I am till this day grateful for the opportunity to choose when and where I got my dogs. I also see the dangers this bill could present. Including increases in online scams for people, lower regulations with breeding causing inhumane conditions for dogs and other pets alike, and greater risk for disease outbreaks. The higher our standards for their welfare the better. I believe we should be focusing on enforcing existing laws by targeting truly abusive operations such as mills and backyard breeders. Don’t take away responsible transparent breeders who are doing the right thing. Don’t take away the freedom for us to Choose.</p>
<p>Mary Wilkinson For themselves</p>	<p>The constant flow of mill puppies into Colorado Pet stores must be stopped. The numbers are breaching the ability of shelters and rescues to take the "unsold" beyond breaking point and dogs are being euthanized for space. STOP THE FLOW, STOP THE DEATHS! PLEASE</p>
<p>Brooke Bolinske For themselves</p>	<p>Supporting this kind of bill isn’t about being anti “pet store; it’s about being pro animal welfare, pro consumer protection, and pro community values. Here are the strongest reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It helps shut down the pipeline from puppy mills.</li> <li>2. It protects families from heartbreak and unexpected costs.</li> <li>3. It encourages adoption and responsible breeding.</li> <li>4. It reduces shelter overcrowding.</li> <li>5. It aligns with modern expectations of animal care.</li> </ul>

	<p>Please vote yes on this bill to stop this inhuman practice.</p> <p>Brooke Bolinske</p>
<p>Michael Polemi For themselves</p>	<p>I I am Michael Polemi, owner of Paw Prints, a pet supply store in Highlands Ranch. I have been a long-time proponent of eliminating the retail sale of live dogs and cats through stores.</p> <p>It is clear that retail puppy/kitten stores are part of the horrific puppy-mill pipeline. It is well-known through published reports and statistics that USDA standards are barely subsistence with little, if any, true enforcement by the USDA. Understanding this, I am very much in favor of eliminating this delivery arm of the puppy mill pipeline.</p> <p>I support responsible breeders who have love and passion for their breeds producing dogs that are both mentally and physically healthy. This bill enables responsible breeders to continue without restriction.</p> <p>My store provides grooming and sale of pet products “ food, toys, beds, etc. I am able to make a good living out of it.</p> <p>Per the World Pet Association 2024 Retail Operating Performane Report “ pet stores that sell only dry goods reported significantly more revenue per square foot than pet stores that sold animals (\$524 compared to \$272 per square foot). There is no valid reason for stores selling live puppies to continue being the delivery arm of the puppy mill pipeline. Those stores should convert to selling dry goods inasmuch as their profits would be much greater than their current model of selling puppies/kittens.</p> <p>Please join me in supporting this excellent bill.</p>
<p>Justin Hileman For themselves</p>	<p>We are Justin and Elise Hileman from Franktown Colorado, We are asking you to support this bill, which will stop the pipeline of abuse with dogs in crates for years on end with nothing to do, no enrichments, no running or joy, just languishing. We personally have rescued 6 puppy mill mothers who have required thousands of dollars in surgeries due to severe neglect. One lost her lower jaw due to untreated severe dental disease. They were stuck in cages in sheds for 7 years each on average with litters every year possible. This cruel trade needs to end. Please support this bill HB-1011.</p>
<p>Betty Pearce For themselves</p>	<p>I am a long-time Basset Hound breeder. I am in full support of this excellent bill.</p> <p>This bill protects the rights of preservation breeders like me. It also protects uneducated consumers from getting talked into buying a poorly bred pet from a third party. This type of sale disconnects the original breeder from the puppy buyer depriving the buyer from ongoing life-time support. The breeder does not even know who bought his puppies. "You got your puppy, I got my money, WE'RE DONE."</p>

	<p>No consumer should buy a puppy under these conditions, although many who are simply unknowledgeable do get sucked into this type of purchase from a third party.</p> <p>Please pass this bill which protects preservation breeders and consumers.</p>
Rebecca Gibbs For themselves	<p>Please stop the sale of animals in pet stores. Puppies and kittens should not be considered inventory items. I personally foster dogs for local rescues, and have seen first hand the amount of suffering puppy mill dogs go through and the heart break unsuspecting families go through when they end up buying a sick dog. I also see how many animals don't have homes and end up being euthanized, often at the cost of the tax payer because local shelters are too full and animals die just to free up space for the next round of animals whom majority of will also die. This will not affect responsible, ethical breeders, as they don't sell dogs in pet stores, or parking lots for that matter. Stopping the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores is the ethical thing to do for humans and animal alike.</p>
Mike Moore For themselves	<p>I volunteer for a dog rescue and I have personally seen Dogs that have survived what can only be described as the "Horrors" of the large commercial dog breeders and the result of how they treat the dogs. Many of these dogs are keep in plywood pins where they have no contact with the outside world. Many of the "Breeder" females are breed every time that they come in heat until they are 7 to 9 years of age. Their puppies are then either bought by a "broker" or shipped to at dog auction where over 400 dogs are sold. I have personally transported several young dogs that were no longer of any value and these dogs were left in a wheat field to die. Having these "Pet Stores" where poor dogs came be sold at only encourages these "Puppy Mills".</p>
Matthew Braun For themselves	<p>I'm submitting testimony in support of this bill because animals are not merchandise. Breeders of dogs and cats treat females as breeding machines keeping them pregnant for most of their adult lives. Animals bred in these conditions often suffer from health conditions such as upper respiratory infections and the financial burden of getting the animals healthy is often passed on to the unwitting customers. Colorado is a state that appreciates nature, but there's nothing natural about forcing animals to breed and then separating the families for profit.</p>
Gina Lordo For themselves	<p>This is incredibly important, especially with the nationwide issues we face with pet overpopulation. Shelters and rescues are overflowing, and there are not enough homes for all the animals being born in the world. This will be one step closer to helping this pet overpopulation, if we can just focus on getting rescue and shelter dogs promoted and adopted, and shut down breeders, back yard breeders and puppy mills! Many states are already doing this, and working for the cause. Although I am in ID now, we used to live in CO, and I am still a volunteer for Big Bones Canine Rescue in Windsor, CO, helping network their dogs, to help them find homes in these challenging times.</p>
Adam Altschuh For themselves	<p>Banning pet stores from selling dogs and cats would be an important step forward to reducing avoidable animal cruelty. I hope you will support this ban.</p>

Robi Kronberg For themselves	I support ending the sale of dogs and cats in Colorado pet stores. I have fostered over 140 dogs and puppies who have been released from commercial breeding facilities. These are the same facilities that provide the puppies for area pet stores. I have fostered puppies with trauma behaviors due to being separated too early from their mothers and being kept in cages. I have fostered numerous breeding females who have untreated medical issues from being bred over and over again. I have fostered puppies who have genetic defects (hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, congenital heart defects, blindness, deafness) due to inferior breeding practices. Allowing breeders who are primarily concerned about profit and less about the well being of their dogs are the ones who are benefiting from the sale of puppies to pet stores. If pet stores were not allowed to sale cats and dogs, breeders would be far less likely to mass produce puppies which in turn causes far fewer breeding males and females to live a life of misery in breeding facilities.
Lief Youngs For themselves	Shelters are over capacity with all breeds and mixed breeds. We can't allow puppy/kitten mills to flood our state with dogs/cats from terrible and undersocialized breeding farms. Let's have stores partner with rescues, as many already do.
Anna Libey For themselves	Hi, as a dog and cat lover and occasional shelter volunteer - I support this bill! Cats and dogs from puppy mills should not be sold in Colorado, when so many animals end up in shelters and wait years for adoption or end up being put down due to lack of resources and space. These puppy mill animals sold purely for profit are more likely to be inbred, suffer behavior and health issues, and go to pet owners who are less informed on their pets needs. Meanwhile there are so many animals in need of adoption and animal shelters are ready to help families who want to adopt pets by offering discounted adoption fees, supplies, and education. Cats and dogs are members of our families, and accordingly they deserve more respect than to be brought into this world only to be bought and sold by breeders and pet store owners who do not have their best interests at heart.
Annel Henderson For themselves	I am a breeder of Scottish Terriers. I am in favor of this bill because it protects preservation breeders. It also provides important protection for consumers.
Melinda Marquis For themselves	Please vote yes on this bill to end puppy mills, which treat dogs and cats cruelly and generate more dogs and cats than Colorado can care for. Puppy mills are run by companies making a profit at the expense of sentient animals who suffer terribly. There are too many dogs and cats for Coloradans to care for, and many dogs and cats get killed at shelters. Please close down puppy mills. - Melinda Marquis, 550 Haul Rd., Nederland, CO, 80466
Jill Forest	Please prohibit the use of dogs and cats in research facilities and protect the animals we care about! These animals spend their lives in cages and live with constant fear

<p>For themselves</p>	<p>and pain. They deserve so much better!!!! Modern science has moved past the need for this. PLEASE help these innocent creatures!!!!</p>
<p>Cynthia Petsch For themselves</p>	<p>I have been volunteering for an animal rescue group for many years and am concerned about animal welfare.  I request that this bill is passed.</p>
<p>Michele Sjaardema For themselves</p>	<p>I am in support of HB26-1011 as I am a responsible dog breeder of Japanese Chins. I do not sell to pet stores or brokers. Responsible breeders build relationships with families. We screen buyers, provide contracts, and agree to take a dog back at any age. Retail stores cannot offer that level of responsibility because they are separated from the breeder by brokers and middlemen.</p> <p>Dogs in large commercial facilities often spend their lives in small cages with little exercise or socialization. That environment can lead to long-term behavioral and medical issues--issues that will not be present in the dogs I sell.</p> <p>As a responsible dog breeder, I believe families deserve honesty an access to the breeder. HB26-1011 strengthens that direct connection.</p> <p>Please support this bill.</p>
<p>Kady Kachinske For themselves</p>	<p>Communities are taking meaningful steps to address the serious issue of animal overpopulation. One of the most impactful measures is ending the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores and instead promoting adoption through local shelters and rescue organizations.</p> <p>Every year, millions of animals enter shelters, many of them healthy and adoptable. By discontinuing retail sales of commercially bred puppies and kittens, we can help reduce demand for large-scale breeding operations and give homeless animals a better chance at finding loving homes.</p> <p>This shift is not about limiting choice â€” itâ€™s about encouraging responsible pet ownership. Adopting from shelters supports humane treatment, reduces overcrowding, and often provides families with pets that are vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and health-checked.</p> <p>By prioritizing adoption over retail sales, we take a compassionate step toward reducing overpopulation, lowering euthanasia rates, and ensuring that every dog and cat has the opportunity to live in a safe and caring home.</p>

	<p>After volunteering for a local animal rescue in Colorado, this is a cause I care deeply about. Instead of continuing to support these unethical pet stores and breeders, let's prioritize the thousands of unhoued, healthy animals that need a home and are in shelters.</p> <p>The devastation caused by unwanted animals in shelters is a heartbreaking reality everywhere.</p> <p>Every year, millions of dogs and cats enter animal shelters because they were abandoned, surrendered, or born without a home. Many arrive frightened, confused, and stressed after losing the only environment they've known. Shelters work tirelessly to care for them, but overcrowding often leads to limited space, stretched resources, and difficult decisions.</p> <p>Overpopulation contributes directly to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>Overcrowded facilities</b>, where animals may spend weeks or months in kennels.</li> <li>* <b>Increased stress and illness</b>, as tight quarters can spread disease.</li> <li>* <b>Emotional trauma</b>, especially for social animals who crave companionship.</li> <li>* <b>Euthanasia in severe cases</b>, when shelters simply run out of space and options.</li> </ul> <p>Behind every statistic is a living being – a loyal dog waiting for a family that never returns, or a cat longing for a quiet home and gentle care. The emotional toll extends beyond the animals; shelter staff and volunteers also experience compassion fatigue from witnessing so much devastation.</p>
<p>Kimberleigh Anders Anders For themselves</p>	<p>As an animal rescue volunteer, I sincerely support this bill.</p>
<p>Madeline Arment For themselves</p>	<p>As a rescue volunteer, we see the thousands of unwanted dogs across our country daily. It is heart breaking how many animals already exist and need homes and care. Selling pets in stores for profit only adds to the problem and creates more animals in a country already overwhelmed with pets who need resources.</p>
<p>Alaina Sigler For</p>	<p>Hello,</p>

<p>themselves</p>	<p>My name is Alaina Sigler and I have been a special education teacher and animal freedom advocate for 12 years. As an educator, I have heard countless stories from students who express deep consideration for their dog and/or cat who they share their homes with. At a young age, we have an innate ability to connect and love. As children, our compassion pours out without restraint, especially when it comes to the animals who share our homes.</p> <p>During my time as an educator, students have expressed great sorrow about the loss of a beloved dog or cat family member. Grief and compassion are not traits unique to humans, but are shared across many species including young puppies and kittens. These characteristics are necessary to more holistically understand the interrelatedness we share with other beings. Given the traits that young children share with puppies, kittens, dogs, and cats, I implore you to keep compassion alive and prohibit mill puppies and kittens from being sold in pet stores. Our deepest understanding of the world can always come back to compassion and that is an active choice you have today.</p> <p>With Gratitude,</p> <p>Alaina Sigler</p>
<p>Maria Peri For themselves</p>	<p>I am begging you to stop the barbaric practice happening in puppy mills and not longer support it by banning the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores. It is time to evolve and not use these poor animals as objects for the sole goal of making money. from them. Cats and dogs have intelligence, feelings and are social beings, reason why we integrate them into ours homes. Stop using them and abusing them a profitable objects.</p>
<p>Mark Houdashelt For themselves</p>	<p>Please vote in support of HB26-1011. It is time to get rid of the sale of pets produced in kitten and puppy mills, where both the mothers and their offspring are often mistreated and kept in horrible conditions. With the abundance of dogs and cats available for adoption from shelters and rescues, there is no need for the retail sale of these pets. For the sake of the animals, please support this bill.</p>
<p>Marcy Haire For themselves</p>	<p>Too many dogs and cats suffer at the hands of puppy mills, pet stores, and research facilities due to unsanitary, negligent, and cruel conditions. The sale of these pet animals from pet stores only fuels the puppy mill industry. Please help uphold Colorado's compassionate nature by passing this piece of legislation.</p> <p>Marcy Haire</p>
<p>Mandy Smith For themselves</p>	<p>I support this bill which will ban the sale of pets that could potentially come from large puppy mill settings. I am an active Foster and volunteer for an animal rescue in Northern Colorado (Big Bones Canine Rescue), and have seen first hand the horrifying condition that animals used for large scale breeding are delivered in when they are rescued from breeding operations. They are subjected to severe neglect, fear humans in many cases, and need extensive rehabilitation/vet care/and in severe</p>

	<p>cases may need to be put down or end up passing away on their own, before we can get them the help that they need. These scenarios are directly abusive to the animals, so it's critical that we stop these facilities from having an outlet for selling puppies or kittens in volume to pet stores. Thank you for bringing this bill forward in the name of the welfare of domestic pets in Colorado. Please get this passed!</p>
<p>Julie Hanan For themselves</p>	<p>Other states have begun banning puppy mill sales. Why hasn't Colorado, one of the most adoption friendly states?</p> <p>For years, large scale breeders have shipped puppies and kittens across our state lines to be sold online or through brokers. Many of these animals come from crowded facilities where profit comes before care.</p> <p>It's imperative we ban 3rd party brokers from selling dogs, cats, and rabbits bred by others for resale. We need to increase transparency so buyers can see where animals come from &amp; strengthen tracking of health records to limit deceptive practices that trap families into buying sick pets.</p> <p>The goal is simple. Stop the flow of animals from cruel breeding operations into Colorado pet markets.</p> <p>This is about more than policy. It's about families who bring home a puppy and end up with huge vet bills. It is about animals who suffer in silence. It's about holding the pet industry, who are selling puppies for \$4000, accountable.</p> <p>Our Colorado rescue organizations carry the burden when these animals are surrendered. They pay the price, not nonreputable breeders. There are breed specific rescues if buyers really want a pure bred.</p> <p>For years, I've been standing in the cold and heat trying to educate buyers in front of puppy mill shops. It's time to legislate as well as educate! Please end the animal abuse and pass this bill.</p>
<p>Jon Severns For themselves</p>	<p>I am writing in strong support of HB26-1011, Transfers of Certain Pet Animals.</p> <p>Puppy mills are large-scale commercial breeding operations that prioritize profit over animal welfare. Dogs and cats in these facilities are often kept in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions with inadequate veterinary care, limited socialization, and little protection from disease or extreme weather. Animals may be repeatedly bred until they are no longer profitable, often living their entire lives confined to cages with minimal human interaction. These conditions are not isolated incidents – they are inherent to an industry built on high volume and low cost.</p>

	<p>Allowing pet stores to sell animals sourced from such operations creates a steady retail pipeline that sustains this model. As long as there is a convenient storefront market for commercially bred puppies and kittens, there is financial incentive to continue large-scale breeding practices that compromise animal welfare. By banning pet stores from selling dogs and cats sourced from puppy mills, this bill would help reduce demand for animals bred under inhumane conditions and shift consumer focus toward adoption and ethical placements.</p> <p>At the same time, Colorado and the nation face a significant shelter overpopulation crisis. According to ASPCA statistics, approximately 334,000 dogs and 273,000 cats were euthanized in U.S. shelters in 2024, many due simply to lack of space and resources. These are adoptable animals whose lives are cut short not because they have medical or behavioral concerns, but because shelters routinely operate at or beyond capacity. Continuing to allow the retail sale of commercially bred animals, while shelters struggle with overcrowding and euthanasia, sends a contradictory message about our state’s commitment to responsible pet stewardship.</p> <p>This bill would help shift consumer demand away from mass breeding operations and toward rescue/shelter adoption or responsible, small-scale breeders who prioritize health, temperament, and humane conditions. Other communities in Colorado have taken similar steps with local ordinances, showing that this approach can reduce the puppy-mill pipeline statewide.</p> <p>There is no ethical justification for supporting an industry that produces more animals for sale while thousands already wait in shelters for families. I urge you to vote yes on HB26-1011.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>- Jon Severns</p>
<p>Theresa Strom For themselves</p>	<p>This bill is another attempt to stop the shameful puppy mill and kitten industries. As if we don’t have enough feral cats roaming our streets, their miserable lives typically ending in an untimely death, while people shun them for hanging around and scratching in their yards. We should blame irresponsible owners who don’t spay or neuter. Where are mandatory spay and neuter programs in our legislature. Instead, we continue to force helpless animals to pay the ultimate price in this industry.</p> <p>The puppy mill industry is deceitful and cruel. We know this! Animals are held in outdoor containers without adequate protection from the elements, laying on wire grates to avoid lazy profiteers from cleaning their cages, birthing litter after litter and having them ripped away in a matter of weeks. Until they are no longer useful. These</p>

	<p>throw sways are often put out into the street, taken to overcrowded shelters or worse. .</p> <p>When I see labradoodles walking it makes me sad as a picture of crowded puppy mills, dirty, noisy factories for whatever set of parents this "product" came from languish until they no longer serve a financial purpose.</p> <p>I am proud to live in Berthoud, where we celebrate Harley and puppy mills are not allowed. Please pass this bill and help to strike down all remaining breeding puppy and kitten mills in this State.</p> <p>And to puppy mill owners, get a real job and stop living off the innocent animals who you neglect and abuse!</p> <p>Theresa Strom Berthoud, Colorado</p>
<p>Thom Murphy For themselves</p>	<p>Selling of puppies from puppy mills is wrong and should be stopped.</p>
<p>Elise Lowe-Vaughn For themselves</p>	<p>I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills.</p>
<p>Susanna Dominguez For themselves</p>	<p>I support the shut down of sales from puppy mills in Colorado, not only because of the needless cruelty and health issues/violations that accompany it, but businesses that have transitioned from pet sales to selling pet products and services has been shown to thrive. Colorado also has an overpopulation issue with their existing shelters and a higher demand for rehoming than adoptions and fosters available to keep up with the demand as it is. It has also come to my attention that these mills started supplying helpless victims to be tortured and mutilated without anesthesia at places like Red Beast Enterprises / Colorado State University in Fort Collins! Credible doctors and veterinarians alike have argued research isn't even relevant when it comes to testing for medicine in humans that doesn't have the same reactions in animals; and much isn't even necessary because AI modeling and stem cell testing have been proven more accurate and reliable sources of research and results! I don't want to pay taxes into a state that allows the pipeline of puppy mills to continue.</p> <p>See link: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNKlqvlgsuI&amp;t=240s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNKlqvlgsuI&amp;t=240s</a></p>

<p>Michelle Schaefer For themselves</p>	<p>On Thursday, April 10, 2025, the Senate Agricultural Committee *unanimously* passed HB25-1180 , leading the way to make it illegal in the state of Colorado to sell pets in parking lots and other public spaces. (In other words: it's a major step toward shutting down puppy and kitten mills.) This speaks strongly to the sentiments held by both voters and the Senate.</p> <p>Passing HB26-1011 (Transfers of Certain Pet Animals) is the next natural step toward ending puppy and kitten mills for good in our great state by prohibiting the sale of puppies and kittens in Colorado pet stores. Because from where do these pet stores procure their puppies and kittens? From the same mills that used to sell pets in parking lots and other public spaces...which the Senate has already voted to shut down.</p> <p>At its core, HB26-1011 simply states: "Adopt. Don't shop." Those seeking to add a furry best friend to their home have myriad wonderful shelters to go to, filled with cats and dogs of all ages who would love to find their forever home. Puppies and kittens (from mills) sold in Colorado pet stores prevent shelter pets from even having a chance to be adopted. Let's pass HB26-1011! It's a win-win for both shelter animals...and their future human companions.</p>
<p>Susan Fowler For themselves</p>	<p>Dogs and cats in puppy mills are treated like trash. Many never get out of their cages or feel grass under their feet. The female and male dogs and cats are used for breeding only and many of them are sick. Once they cannot breed anymore, they are drowned or thrown in ditches to die. Please shut down these puppy mills that provide pet stores with sick animals that were breed from moms and dads that are treated inhumanly.</p>
<p>Debra Maslov For themselves</p>	<p>I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills! They are cruel &amp; far from the best way for pets to be adopted.</p>
<p>Barbara White For themselves</p>	<p>My name is Barbara White and I am in support of HB26-1011. I am a breeder of Malamutes. I am a responsible dog breeder. I believe transparency is essential.</p> <p>When families purchase from me, they visit my home, meet at least one parent dog, review health testing, and see how my dogs are raised. That is the standard responsible breeders follow. Pet stores and brokers cannot offer that transparency. Puppies are shipped from out-of-state commercial breeding facilities, often in Missouri or Nebraska, and consumers never see the conditions in which those dogs were raised.</p>

	<p>A USDA license does not mean humane treatment. Federal standards are minimal and enforcement has historically been weak. As a responsible dog breeder, I know that meeting only the minimum standard is not enough.</p> <p>HB26-1011 moves the needle forward for families so they find responsible breeders and work directly with them rather than unknowingly supporting the puppy mill pipeline. I recognize that the world and scams are vast and we need to step up educating the public about how to find puppies from responsible breeders .</p> <p>Please vote yes on this bill.</p>
<p>Marty Green For themselves</p>	<p>I am for this bill as it will help to assure the humane treatment of animals. By having buyers of puppies and kittens deal with breeders where they can see the conditions and meet the parental animals and the breeders. As legitimate breeders do not sell to pet shops. Allowing pet shops to sell puppies and kittens for profit only can only stoke the mistreatment of the animals involved and is what allows puppy mills to exist. Removing this final step from the pipeline will help to reduce the abuse of manâ€™s best and oldest friends.</p>
<p>Carol Gustafson For themselves</p>	<p>I am a Colorado citizen and would like to urge you to support HB26-1011 to pass a state wide ordinance to prohibit the sales of cats and dogs in pet stores. Passing this ordinance will help to shut down the puppy mill pipeline. Reputable breeders do not sell their animals through pet stores to unscreened purchasers. Twenty six cities in Colorado have already passed similar ordinances so I urge you to vote this ordinance through and protect innocent animals state wide! Animals are here with us, not for us. It is our duty to protect them from cruelty and harm.</p>
<p>Elizabeth Neal Against themselves</p>	<p>I am writing again today to plead with you to please vote NO on HB26-1011. There are many businesses who sell pets that are respectable and honorable. Please remember that these are the small businesses that have been an American dream for these owners and it would be wrong to take that right away as long as guidelines and laws are followed to keep the animals safe. It has come to my attention that Representative Duran has refused to meet with any of the 7 owners and that is extremely alarming to know about a person who may be considered for higher office.</p> <p>Once again, Dustin Haworth, the owner of Pet City is a kind, compassionate man who has worked hard to keep his business honorable while providing a safe place to get a pet for a family or person. I beseech you to please consider the injustice this bill does to a hard-working family with integrity.</p> <p>Kindly,</p> <p>Beth Neal 719-290-6478</p>

<p>Erin Marquardt Against themselves</p>	<p>I have purchased pets at pet stores. They came from puppy mills and they weren't healthy. One almost died and the pet store refused to pay for treatment. These pets suffer unnecessarily.</p>
<p>Laurie Rugenstein For themselves</p>	<p>Please support HB26-1011 to prohibit the sale of dog and cats in Colorado pet stores and help put an end to "puppy mills"</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration,</p> <p>Laurie Rugenstein Boulder county</p>
<p>Mary Timby For themselves</p>	<p>I support ending the sale of dogs and cats in Colorado pet stores because it helps reduce the demand that fuels inhumane commercial breeding operations. Too many animals in shelters are already waiting for homes, and pet stores can instead partner with local rescues to showcase adoptable pets. This shift prioritizes animal welfare over profit and encourages responsible adoption. Colorado has the opportunity to lead with a policy that protects animals and supports ethical pet ownership.</p>
<p>Kay Linder Against themselves</p>	<p>Fort Collins laboratories source dogs and cats from large-scale commercial breeders known as puppy and kitten mills. There are no humane puppy mills. Commercial breeders sell living dogs and dead dogs, including body parts to research facilities. There is systemic medical neglect. Evidence confirms dogs and cats were routinely denied basic veterinary care. Federal oversight has proven to be inadequate and federal standards are minimal. Under USDA guidelines, extreme suffering is legally permitted under research exemptions.</p> <p>Biotechnology gives us powerful alternatives to animal testing, methods that advance human and veterinary medicine faster, cheaper, and far more accurately. Federal agencies are currently phasing out animal research in favor of these superior research tools. Organs-on-chips, In Vitro technology and AI now provide advanced methodologies that are more accurate, reliable, and humane.</p> <p>Please consider the welfare of these precious beings and stop the transfer of their lives in Colorado pet stores.</p> <p>Kay L. Linder</p> <p>“Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace.”</p> <p>Albert Schweitzer</p>
<p>Jill Ellenton For themselves</p>	<p>Sales of puppies and kittens are an outlet for puppy mills which are cruel to the animals that they breed. I have seen cruel conditions first hand. I also have a retired puppy mill momma who was discarded because she was over bred and had a puppy with one eye. Thankfully a rescue was able to save her before they took her behind the barn to shoot her. She was so scared she couldn't even figure out how to</p>

	walk through a doorway. Years later she is the sweetest girl ever. I only wish her first 6 years werenâ€™t torture for her.
Margaret Vaccarella For themselves	I support ending the sale of animals in Colorado pet stores because animal mills prioritize profit over welfare, producing deplorable conditions that cause immense suffering. Shifting to adoption and responsible rescue options saves lives, reduces overbreeding, and gives homes to animals in need. Public policy should reflect humane standards, prevent exploitation, and empower shelters and rescues to connect pets with loving families. This change is urgent, ethical, and achievable with strong enforcement and community support.
Jessica Diaz For themselves	Phasing out the sale of dogs and cats in retail pet stores is a significant step toward prioritizing animal welfare over commercial profit. By shifting the focus to adoption from shelters and reputable breeders, Colorado can help curb the demand for animals sourced from high-volume "mill" facilities that often overlook health and genetic standards. This transition not only reduces the burden on local animal rescues but also ensures that pet owners are bringing home companions that have been raised in humane, transparent environments.
Kimberly Clarkson For themselves	I believe that it important to stop the sale of dogs and cats at pet stores, because that pipeline enables the irresponsible breeding of those animals for profit. Responsible breeders, and shelters are better resources for people to find a pet. Thank you for your time.
Kelsey Holman For themselves	Good afternoon all and thank you for your time,  My name is Kelsey, I am a Brighton Colorado resident and fully support HB26-1011. It is time pet selling pet stores become a thing of the past. Colorado needs to enact this measure to protect both pets and families from falling victim to pet stores schemes. It prevents consumers from unknowingly purchasing pets with health or behavioral issues, which are common in high-volume, for-profit commercial breeding. This bill will directly combat the commercial breeding industry ("puppy mills") by preventing retail pet stores from selling dogs, cats, and rabbits. The legislation brings a consistent, state-wide approach to what 26 Colorado cities have already implemented locally, eliminating the patchwork of regulations. In addition this bill will reduce shelter overcrowding by promoting adoption over purchasing. HB26-1011 helps alleviate the pressure on animal shelters, which are experiencing high rates of owner surrenders, as noted by Humane Colorado.  Thank you for your time and consideration regarding the pets and people of Colorado. Letâ€™s pass this together!!
Eric Belcher Against themselves	This bill is going to do more harm than good. There are many families that should not be forced to bring an animal with an uncertain past into their home. Passing this bill will cause a rise in animals going to homes that they shouldnâ€™t have therefore causing them to be re surrendered or set loose. Just like a similar bill in CA did this bill will cause an explosion of unregulated puppy sales in Colorado. I canâ€™t think

	<p>of one positive outcome from passing this bill. I truly believe this bill is extremely dangerous for animals and people in Colorado.</p>
<p>Benjamin Collins Against themselves</p>	<p>I oppose to this bill, it is dangerous for our rights in Colorado.</p>
<p>Aidan Swears Against themselves</p>	<p>I oppose this because I believe this will be extremely dangerous for the people and animals of Colorado. This will risk losing the steps that have been taken to trace what has and will happen with the animals and ensure they are from the proper sources such as what PACFA regulates for licensed breeders. The standard for what these animals have today and what they have been given every step of the way, will be given up entirely.</p>
<p>Gary Gibbs For themselves</p>	<p>Please stop the sale of puppies and kittens in pet stores. Dogs and cats aren't inventory line items and shouldn't be left alone unattended for hours or days while the businesses are closed over nights and weekends. Most pet stores have gone to adoption events to help local shelter and rescues find homes, while still selling pet food and products. 100 % of dogs and cats in pet stores come from puppy mills, which are large, inhumane breeding operations, often with bad breeding practices, meaning the people or families who purchase them from pet store often end up having to spend thousands because the dog or cat is in poor health. Stop the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores and protect your citizens. There is already an overpopulation of dogs and cats, many who are euthanized often at the taxpayer expense to make more room in shelters. Please help stop the inhumane sale of dogs and cats in pet stores. Thank you.</p>
<p>Elisa Phillips Against Aquaticdog</p>	<p>We would like to submit our position against this bill.</p> <p>All our puppies come from licensed breeders, are seen by licensed veterinarians, and have paperwork every step of the way accompanying them. They and their parents receive the very best care available and everything is transparent.</p> <p>A complete ban destroys this transparency and risks creating an explosion of unregulated, untraceable, underground animals with no background history in Colorado.</p> <p>Also, this bill risks putting many long standing, tax paying businesses in Colorado out of business. With ripple effects many states out.</p> <p>Again, we vehemently oppose this bill.</p>

	Thank you for your time.
Mike Russo Against themselves	This bill is absurd. Passing this bill will inevitably cause an unimaginable amount of unregulated animal sales in Colorado. This bill is bad for animals and people.
Margaux Metevia Against themselves	I don't believe this should pass
Tanya Daganaar For themselves	I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills.
Brent Flood Against Pet city	I have worked for this company for almost 20 years. I have been a driver and an in-store employee. We are a family that takes pride in what we do. Nothing can make us more happy than seeing a family taking their family member home. We work hard to take care of all our animals in our store. Taking away this from our store affects more than just the animals; it has a large effect on our employees that rely on this job to pay their bills. At least 15 people's jobs will be affected. Again, we take pride in our store and don't do this just for the money. We live our jobs and every animal that comes through our doors. Please, I implore you to vote against this bill. Thank you Brent.
Jacci McKenna For themselves	I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills. Thank you!
Repp Susan For themselves	In the U.S. we euthanize approximately 3k perfectly healthy animals per day and of these at least 30% are purebreds! Puppy mills churn out animals in deplorable conditions and the USDA has failed year after year to hold breeders accountable. The laws are outdated, insufficient, inhumane, and fail to protect the animals...a tiger without teeth! Profit over the welfare of animals is the status quo. Until the shelters are empty, why do we continue down this path! Across the world, countries are taking a stand and when our own DOJ admits the system is failing, THAT says it all!
Paige Miltenberger For themselves	House Bill 26-1011 represents a balanced, humane, and effective solution. It does not prohibit responsible breeding or pet ownership. Instead, it targets the commercial retail

	<p>system that enables large-scale breeding operations while preserving ethical pathways</p> <p>for acquiring companion animals.</p> <p>Passing this bill will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i.; Reduce animal suffering</li> <li>i.; Protect Colorado consumers</li> <li>i.; Support shelters and rescues</li> <li>i.; Promote responsible breeding practices</li> <li>i.; Reduce shelter overcrowding and resource strain</li> <li>i.; Align Colorado with proven, humane public policy</li> </ul> <p>Colorado has long been a leader in animal welfare. Passing House Bill 26-1011 will strengthen consumer protections, reduce animal suffering, and ensure a more humane and responsible system for companion animals in our state.</p> <p>I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 26-1011.</p>
<p>LYNN Welch For themselves</p>	<p>I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills.</p> <p>Lynn Welch Boulder, CO 303-718-9271 Lwelch58@gmail.com</p>
<p>Patti Swope For themselves</p>	<p>â€œI support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills.â€</p> <p>I canâ€™t thank you enough for helping pass this crucial legislation.</p> <p>Thanks!</p>
<p>Elizabeth Hieronymus For themselves</p>	<p>I support HB26-1011! This nation has a massive problem with pet overpopulation and the sad fate of euthanasia for many companion animals. Allowing store to sell puppies and other animals, when there are far too many dogs, cats, bunnies etc. waiting at shelters to be adopted before their time runs out is immoral. Almost any breed or age of animal can be found through a shelter, Humane Society, breed rescue, etc. There is NO reason to allow for the sale of these companion animals while so many other dogs and cats are put to death. Thank you for your time.</p>
<p>Kristi Skipper For themselves</p>	<p>I am Kristi Skipper. I am in favor of HB26-1011. I am a breeder of Akitas.</p> <p>I am a preservation breeder who breeds for health, temperament and conformation. I personally meet every single puppy buyer, check them out and stay in touch for life.</p>

	<p>In fact, in the last two years I have taken back two of my dogs (7 and 9 years old) due owner's illness and/or passing away.</p> <p>This is what responsible breeders do. Puppies from puppy mills have no known breeder with responsibility for the puppies they have bred and sold. Many times, you don't even know who the breeders are.</p> <p>My daughter bought a puppy from a pet store. The dog was very ill. The health guarantee from the pet store was short and my daughter was out \$6,000 for the purchase price of the puppy. Vet expenses then became many thousands of dollars. This puppy was clearly not bred for health. There was no recourse against the retail store or breeder.</p> <p>I believe every consumer should get a puppy bred for health along with a relationship with the breeder who stands behind their puppies and finds ways to mentor and ensure the puppy's well-being.</p> <p>I am in support of this bill as retail pet stores are a delivery arm of puppy mills wherein there is no relationship between the buyer and the breeder to ensure health and wellness.</p> <p>Retail pet stores are a totally unsatisfactory link with the buyer. Buyers do not receive sufficient mentorship on the breed and its needs. Lots of these dogs end up in shelters, not back with the breeder, leaving the buyer and the puppy heartbroken.</p> <p>I am in strong support of this bill as it both protects consumers and preservation breeders.</p> <p>Please join me in supporting this.</p>
<p>Timothy Swope For themselves</p>	<p>I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills.</p>
<p>Alyssa Mcconkey For themselves</p>	<p>Puppy mills are large, inhumane breeding operations, often with bad breeding practices, meaning the people or families who purchase them from pet stores often end up having to spend thousands because the dog is in poor health.</p>
<p>Meghan Shannon</p>	<p>I am writing in support of HB26-1011. I owned a veterinary practice in Centennial for 22 years and have treated countless sick puppies from pet stores. Puppies were</p>

For themselves	shipped from other states, sometimes traveling 12 hours with no food or water. Many were dealing with chronic Giardia, pneumonia, hypoglycemia, ear infections, sometimes behavior problems, congenital and orthopedic abnormalities, and so much more. I also have cared for former breeding dogs needing homes after puppy mill breeding facilities are shut down. They have never received vet care or human affection and have so much to overcome in their new homes. These dogs often have chronic untreated skin, eye and dental infections, mammary cancer, are not house trained, and don't know how to receive love. Colorado must end its participation in the cruel pipeline of perpetual animal abuse.
Mary Darcy For themselves	I strongly support this bill which will end the puppy mill pipeline in Colorado by prohibiting the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores. The puppy and kitten mills that provide these animals have been shown repeatedly to be horrible places that are profiting off of a cruel system. There are so many cats and dogs who need homes. With all the information we now have, these puppy/kitten mills should not be operating at all. Please pass bill HB26-1011.
Lindsey Blocker For themselves	I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills.
Sandra Good For themselves	As someone who has fostered numerous dogs "released" from commercial breeders, I have seen first hand how their neglect can break the mind, body and spirit of a Golden Retriever. I have rehabbed many terrified dogs. Can you imagine a sad Golden? Sounds impossible to achieve but I promise you this is what commercial breeders do. They do it because they have pet stores willing to buy their animals. We must end the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores if we care about the poor, suffering pets living in cages and being used for commercial breeding. We have to stop the puppy mill pipeline. Dogs come into rescue missing eyes because their cage was power washed while they were inside it. Their teeth rotten and their feet deformed. Anyone who has a pet they love would be horrified to know how that animals parents have been forced to live. We euthanize millions of dogs and cats every year for lack of a home and yet we continue to allow commercial breeding facilities to operate and pet stores to sell their animals? It's sad and completely inhumane. Please, get HB26-1011 out of Committee and make it LAW. Prohibit the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores. Your pets will thank you.
Sharon Hodge For themselves	I am Sharon Hodge and I am a Colorado resident in support of HB26-1011.  I own Pet Works, a pet supply store in Arvada.  I continue to make profits selling pet supplies. Pet supplies is a rapidly growing corner of the industry with lots of opportunity for profit.  The pet industry is growing so rapidly that Americans are projected to spend over \$250 billion on pets by 2030, with food, treats, grooming, insurance, and training

	<p>driving that growth. Live animal sales are such a small portion of the market that they are no longer even tracked as a distinct category by the American Pet Products Association.</p> <p>Most pet businesses in Colorado already operate successfully without selling live animals. Selling puppies is a small and shrinking portion of the overall pet industry.</p> <p>This bill does not undermine small businesses. It modernizes the industry and removes the reliance on a supply chain that sources puppies from large commercial breeding facilities with minimal Federal oversight.</p> <p>HB26-1011 is a reasonable measure that is good for consumers and better for animals.</p> <p>Please support this bill.</p>
<p>Gabrielle Metzger For themselves</p>	<p>I fully support stopping the sale of puppies and kittens in pet stores that usually purchase these pets from puppy and kitten mills. We have two rescues and see the aftermath of these horrible conditions for the parent animals. Please stop these sales from happening.</p>
<p>Carol Ho For themselves</p>	<p>Pet stores enable puppy mills by allowing the sale of puppies (and kittens too).</p> <p>I understand that dog breeders are regulated, and one argument for allowing the sale of puppies is that the breeders are in compliance with the regulations. The Animal Welfare Act " a law under the USDA - sets standards for treatment of dogs bred for commercial sale. Dogs are kept in enclosures with a minimum floor space that is calculated by measuring the length of the dog and adding six inches, then square that number. For example, a dog that is two feet lives in a cage that is 6.25 square feet. There is no requirement in the regulations stating that the dog ever needs to be let out of the cages for any reason, such as exercise, socializing, or "going potty." The exercise requirement can be met by doubling the floor space, so now the dog has 12.5 square feet where it can be confined for most or all of its life. Unlike family farm breeders, puppy mills provide a steady stream of puppies that end up in retail stores. The puppies in the stores are adorable, but the parents of these puppies at the breeding facilities live in a cage - out of sight, out of mind.</p> <p>With breeding facilities producing hundreds of puppies all year long, we would be kidding ourselves to think that they are voluntarily providing more humane conditions than the regulations require, which would involve cost, labor, and time.</p> <p>Many jurisdictions have decided that this is not okay with them and have banned the retail sale of puppies in their cities or states.</p>

	<p>I believe that if people knew the reality of the lives of the dogs at the puppy mills, they would be shut down. Thank you.</p>
<p>Sandra Farkas For themselves</p>	<p>As a resident of Colorado, I am writing to ask that you support HB26-1011.</p> <p>There are currently eight states with similar humane pet sales laws in place. With your help, Colorado can join these communities on the forefront of this issue and help close the puppy-mill-to-pet-store pipeline.</p> <p>Thanks in advance for doing the right thing.</p> <p>Sandra Farkas 1465 Lodge Ln Boulder CO 80303</p>
<p>Lindsey Bohlender For themselves</p>	<p>Chair and Members of the Committee,</p> <p>I am writing in support of House Bill 26-1011. This legislation would end the retail sale of dogs and cats in pet stores and through brokers in Colorado, while preserving adoption through shelters and rescues and allowing direct sales from responsible breeders. It is a practical, balanced response to documented animal welfare and consumer protection concerns.</p> <p>Large-scale commercial breeding operations, often referred to as puppy mills, are driven by volume and profit. Animals in these facilities are frequently kept in crowded conditions, bred repeatedly, and denied adequate veterinary care. Retail stores and brokers provide a key sales channel that distances consumers from the true origin and conditions of these animals. Eliminating the retail pipeline addresses demand at its source and reduces the profitability of inhumane breeding practices.</p> <p>This issue also affects consumers. Families often purchase puppies without clear information about breeding conditions, health history, or genetic background. The result can be significant medical costs, behavioral challenges, and emotional distress. By removing opaque retail channels while maintaining adoption and responsible breeder options, House Bill 26-1011 strengthens transparency and accountability.</p> <p>Many Colorado municipalities have already enacted local restrictions on retail pet sales, reflecting strong public support. A statewide standard would create consistency and prevent Colorado from serving as a retail outlet for animals produced in large-scale commercial facilities.</p>

	<p>House Bill 26-1011 does not prohibit responsible breeding or pet ownership. It targets the commercial retail system that enables high-volume breeding while reinforcing ethical and transparent pathways for acquiring companion animals.</p> <p>This bill will reduce animal suffering, strengthen consumer protections, support shelters, and promote responsible breeding practices. I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 26-1011.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely, Lindsey Bohlender</p>
<p>GENEVIEVE JACOBI For themselves</p>	<p>I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills and the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores. This is not to say that one can't find dogs and cats for adoption in pet stores. This has become the norm in many pet stores now that I have seen and personally participated in up and down the Front Range. It is wonderful that pet stores are collaborating with animal shelters and pet adoption groups to place their animals. A higher percentage than one would think are purebred animals and puppies. Here is some information about the current status of dogs and cats in our state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In 2025, just one major organization, Humane Colorado, served over 40,000 homeless pets, and the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region reported over 13,000 adoptions, suggesting a high, constant</li> <li>- High Intake Trends: Shelters are facing increased demand, with Denver Animal Shelter reporting a significant increase in surrenders, sometimes totaling nearly five dogs surrendered daily.</li> </ul> <p>Adoption Rates: Despite high intake, Colorado has strong adoption rates. In early 2026, MaxFund Animal Adoption Center showed dozens of dogs and cats available, a snapshot of the ongoing, daily availability across the state.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity Challenges: While many pets are adopted, shelters are often at capacity due to rising surrenders, often driven by housing issues or costs, meaning hundreds of pets are available for adoption at any given time.</li> </ul> <p>Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, to stop even more pets for profit in stores and help break the cycle of pet overpopulation.</p>
<p>Ann Herzog For themselves</p>	<p>I speak for those animals who cannot. I support a bill that will end the puppy and kitten mill pipeline. Evidence has shown cruel environments for the animals in these circumstances, all for profit.</p>

<p>Ashley Waddell</p> <p>For themselves</p>	<p>I strongly support 26-1011, which stands to save the lives of many animals and stop the flow of puppy-milled and kitten-milled animals into Colorado (documents show that out-of-state breeders tend to profit more than any locals from Colorado pet sales).</p> <p>Many pet-oriented stores that once sold animals have successfully pivoted to selling accessories and pet food (often while partnering with companion-animal rescue organizations) and remain robust businesses. Meanwhile, the reduced demand for large-scale "mill bred" puppies and kittens can help spare animals from living in deplorable conditions... and also save the consumer from the myriad illnesses and conditions these animals often develop, which are both heartbreaking and expensive for the consumer, and painful (or lethal) for the animals.</p> <p>Passing 26-1011 is the right thing for Colorado consumers, for the animals, and for our values. Please pass it!</p>
<p>Jane Shaw</p> <p>For themselves</p>	<p>I am writing in strong support of HB 26-1011.</p> <p>The commercial breeding pipeline that supplies many pet stores depends on animals living in confinement, bred repeatedly for profit, often with minimal enrichment and inadequate standards of care. As long as retail outlets exist for this system, it continues.</p> <p>HB 26-1011 is a humane and reasonable step. It does not ban pet ownership, adoption, or responsible breeders selling directly. It simply removes the storefront marketplace that allows mass breeding operations to thrive.</p> <p>Dogs and cats are sentient, social beings. We have domesticated them, rely on their companionship, and claim to love them. Allowing them to be treated as inventory undermines our own values.</p> <p>Ending retail pet sales of commercially bred dogs and cats is a clear moral line. I urge you to vote yes.</p>
<p>Jody Lyon</p> <p>Against themselves</p>	<p>I believe that the pet stores should be allowed to sell dogs and cats. Not everyone wants to adopt from a shelter. The store makes it easier to see different breeds without having to hunt down and locate multiple breeders and set up multiple different visitations. The stores get dogs and cats shots, de-wormed and vet care when/if needed. I think by preventing the stores from selling the dogs and cats there are going to be a lot more backyard breeders with animals that are not taken care of.</p>
<p>Jeffery Stone</p> <p>For</p>	<p>I stand for animal rights and strongly support ending the sale of dogs and cats in Colorado pet stores. It is inhuman to exploit animals for purposes of profit, testing or for breeders to treat these sentient beings with such disregard so that they can</p>

themselves	make money. END THE SALE OF DOGS, CATS, FERRETS and other domestic animals in pet stores. DO BETTER.
Ingrid Moore For themselves	Please vote YES on this bill.  The bill protects consumers from deceptive practices and shuts down the 'puppy mill pipeline' by preventing retail stores and brokers from selling dogs bred in inhumane commercial facilities, where animals suffer from inadequate care, disease, and behavioral issues. The bill supports responsible breeders, animal shelters, and rescues, while ending cruelty to dogs in commercial breeding operations.  I still remember seeing kittens for sale in a pet store that were sick, with no hope of receiving treatment and no hope of being "saved" - who would buy a sick animal?  PLEASE VOTE YES!
Marije terEllen For themselves	As a resident of Colorado, I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills.
Patricia Babbitt Amend themselves	This bill is a good start, but our animals need more protection. I would like to see the bill also prohibit sales of animals to breeders and research facilities.  Thank you,  Patricia Babbitt 80521
Callie Brady For themselves	I do not think that pet stores should be allowed to sell animals. The animals that they have available come from mills that are notorious for animal abuse. Animals are kept in small enclosures where they are continuously bred for profit. They are neglected physically, often times they are denied medical care and grooming. Animal mills should be illegal and pet stores should not be allowed to purchase animals from them.
Shelley Coldiron For themselves	Colorado's shelters and rescues are overwhelmed with abandoned companion animals and strays. If someone prefers a pure bred, there are plenty of rescues with almost all breeds that anyone could want. Shops that sell companion animals typically source from puppy mills, this practice needs to stop. Focus on reputable shelters for pure bred companions.
Jane Ann Wagner For themselves	Please pass bill HB26-1011 as soon as possible. It is Heartbreaking to know that these Precious Dogs and Cats are still being S.O.L.D. in Pet Stores in Colorado. They are being kept in small cages and are "slaves" to the whims of these Pet Store owners. It's Unbearable just to know that this is still happening in Colorado...May God Bless You All who are trying to stop this horrendous activity. Thank You, Jane A. Wagner Red Feather Lakes, CO 80545 970-881-3660
Crystal Heath	I write to express my strong support for House Bill 26-1011, which would prohibit the sale, lease, barter, auction, or transfer of ownership of dogs and cats by pet stores

<p>For Our Honor</p>	<p>and brokers beginning January 1, 2027. Under current law, pet stores in Colorado may sell dogs and cats if they meet licensing and other statutory requirements. HB26-1011 appropriately removes that permission while still allowing shelters, rescues, and responsible direct transfers by owners and original breeders to continue “preserving responsible pathways to match animals with loving homes while eliminating commercial retail markets that too often source from high-volume breeding operations.</p> <p>The urgency of this reform is underscored by the ongoing crisis of dog and cat overpopulation in the United States. According to data compiled by animal welfare organizations:</p> <p>Nationwide, nearly 4.8 million dogs and cats entered shelters in 2024, and approximately 425,000 were killed (a combination of euthanasia and other non-live outcomes).</p> <p>Source: Best Friends Pet Data (2024): <a href="https://bestfriends.org/saving-shelter-animals/pet-data">https://bestfriends.org/saving-shelter-animals/pet-data</a></p> <p>Data from shelter systems shows continued high intake levels, with about 2.8 million dogs and cats entering shelters and rescues in the first half of 2025, even as adoption and transfer efforts work to find homes.</p> <p>Source: Shelter Animals Count 2025 Mid-Year Report: <a href="https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/explore-the-data/2025-mid-year-report">https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/explore-the-data/2025-mid-year-report</a></p> <p>These statistics reflect a profound mismatch between the number of companion animals born and the number of permanent homes available. Retail pet sales, particularly those supplied by third-party brokers and high-volume breeders, contribute to this oversupply by creating market incentives for breeding operations that prioritize output over animal welfare. Restricting commercial sales incentivizes adoption, supports shelters and rescues, and aligns with policy trends in Colorado municipalities and other states that have adopted similar reforms.</p> <p>HB26-1011 strikes a practical balance: it eliminates a retail channel that fuels unsustainable breeding and consumer risk while preserving ethical pathways for homes through shelters, rescues, and responsible ownership transfers. I respectfully urge you to support and advance this bill.</p> <p>Sincerely, Crystal Heath, DVM Executive Director Our Honor</p>
<p>Brent Johannes For</p>	<p>This Bill will help alleviate stress on Colorado shelters, which are under enormous strain.</p>

<p>themselves</p>	<p>A recent Westword article published on Dec. 22, 2025 showed that the Denver Animal Shelter took in a record number of owner-surrendered pets in 2025, the highest level in nearly two decades. This surge reflects a system that produces more animals than communities can responsibly absorb.</p> <p>HB26-1011 is a common-sense step toward addressing that imbalance. By ending the retail sale of dogs and cats and curbing broker-based sales, the bill helps reduce the pipeline of animals bred for profit while shelters are already overwhelmed.</p> <p>At a time when shelters are struggling to keep up, Colorado should stop fueling overproduction and start prioritizing stability, adoption, and animal welfare. HB26-1011 does exactly that.</p>
<p>Sarah Witherell For themselves</p>	<p>Per PACFA's most recently available statistics, over 10,000 dogs and cats were euthanized in Colorado shelters and rescues in 2024. There simply are not enough viable households to support the number of companion animals in our state and permitting pet stores to sell animals from out of state breeders is only compounding this issue. I encourage the Committee to support HB26-1011 which will stop the out of state breeding pipeline into Colorado. Thank you for considering my comments.</p>
<p>Ted Struzeski For themselves</p>	<p>I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills.</p>
<p>Mindy Gasparek For themselves</p>	<p>I'm in favor of this bill. Puppies and kittens are often shipped over state lines and sold in pet stores for thousands of dollars. They're bred in large-scale commercial breeders, it's often the parents that live a sad life of breeding for profit. It's impossible to see first-hand the conditions of the parents. The pet store's primary intention is profit.</p> <p>Plenty of pet stores operate successfully without selling dogs and cats, they don't have to go out of business when they stop selling cats and dogs, they can change their business model.</p> <p>Also, if a consumer wants a dog from a breeder, there are reputable breeders locally where they are able to meet the parents of the pet and see the conditions they live in. Respectfully, Mindy Gasparek Manitou Springs, CO 80829</p>
<p>Julien Wulfgar For themselves</p>	<p>Dogs are sentient sensitive beings and puppy mills treat them like objects that serve one purpose: to churn out as many babies for maximum profit. They are locked in cages under filthy conditions and made pregnant again and again. Once they are no longer "useful" they are killed or dumped. We have a serious problem</p>

	<p>nationwide from these puppy mills. Their puppies are often sick, genetically defective. And many end up in shelters or rescue. Some are so negatively impacted that they have deep psychological scars as will live there if rest of their lives as wounded fragile beings. Many end up getting euthanized. Please put protections in place so dogs, who are on the emotional and intellectual level of toddlers, are no longer being treated like moneymakers. Dogs coevolved with humans. They deserve better from us.</p>
<p>Nancy Severns For themselves</p>	<p>Buying a puppy from a pet store should never mean unknowingly supporting cruelty. Yet many puppies sold in retail stores come from large-scale commercial dog breeders where profit comes before animal welfare. Puppy mills are notorious for overcrowded cages – often with dogs never allowed out – along with inadequate veterinary care and relentless breeding until animals’ bodies give out. Dogs are frequently discarded once they are no longer profitable, often around age 5. Puppies raised in these conditions are more likely to suffer serious health problems, leaving families with heartbreak and unexpected veterinary bills. Ending retail puppy sales cuts off one of the primary profit pipelines that sustains these operations.</p> <p>I am in support of bill HB26-1011. I respectfully request you end the sale of puppies through pet stores and brokers.</p>
<p>Heather McGee For themselves</p>	<p>I am writing in support of bill HB26-1011 to prohibit the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores. These animals are purchased from puppy mills where they are disgracefully and inhumanely treated and sold to unsuspecting people. As a volunteer with animal rescues for over 14 years, I have seen the horrors of what puppy mills do to make a buck. Anything that stops the demand, helps stop the supplier. There are far too many animals that need homes without mass producing for the almighty dollar.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Heather McGee</p>
<p>Connie Williams For themselves</p>	<p>As an animal advocate I believe we should do all that we can to shut down puppy mills and urge people to adopt from shelters. My dog Koda came from a kill shelter and is now a shining star as a therapy dog. I could go on and on about what a wonderful dog he is, but I'll just say it took time for him to overcome his fears and build confidence. The more we can do to push people to adopt, the more dogs like Koda will be saved.</p>
<p>Scott Carman For themselves</p>	<p>Members of the Agriculture Committee:</p> <p>As a Colorado resident and voter, I am writing to express my strong support for HB26-1011, which would prohibit the sale of cats and dogs in Colorado pet stores.</p>

	<p>This bill is a vital step toward ending the inhumane practices associated with "puppy mills" and ensuring that animals are treated with the dignity they deserve.</p> <p>Pet stores that sell animals typically source them from high-volume commercial breeders where the animals are seen simply as breeding machines and welfare is not a priority. By shifting the focus toward animal shelters, rescues, and direct-from-breeder sales, this legislation protects Colorado families from the heartbreak of purchasing pets with undisclosed health or behavioral issues and unwittingly supporting a cruel and inhumane industry. It also ensures that our state joins the eight others that have already passed similar legislation in leading the nation towards more ethical animal welfare standards.</p> <p>I urge you to vote in favor of HB26-1011 to help make Colorado a safer and more compassionate place for animals and families alike. Thank you for your time and for your service to our state.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Scott Carman Fort Collins, CO</p>
<p>Julie Mackay Percy For themselves</p>	<p>I respectfully request that you vote in favor of HB26-1011, because this bill will help stop the sale of dogs and cats bred by unregulated breeders. Most or all of the dogs and cats sold in pet stores are supplied by local or out-of-state unregulated and unscrupulous puppy/kitten mills and breeders. Many of these pets suffer greatly in their young lives, are unvaccinated, and may have serious illnesses, resulting in unexpected high vet bills for the new pet owners. Many purchasers cannot pay the vet bills and so have to relinquish their new dogs or cats to shelters, resulting in increased shelter overcrowding and very disappointed buyers. Please help stop this serious and heartbreaking cycle of dog and cat suffering and the loss of money and companionship by unsuspecting purchasers of pets provided by unprincipled and uncaring breeders.</p> <p>Please cast a YES vote on HB26-1011.</p> <p>Thank you very much for your consideration.</p> <p>Respectfully submitted,</p> <p>Julie Mackay Percy</p>

<p>Pamela Belleau</p> <p>For themselves</p>	<p>Hello Committee Members,</p> <p>My name is Pam Belleau and I am in support HB26-1011. I am a breeder of Havanese dogs, and as a responsible dog breeder, I carefully plan each litter with health and temperament in mind.</p> <p>The retail model depends on volume. Pet stores must keep puppies in stock at all times, which requires high-volume commercial breeding operations. Responsible breeders cannot and do not operate that way. We breed selectively, conduct recommended health testing, and remain accountable to the families we serve.</p> <p>Consumers often pay thousands of dollars for pet store puppies and are sometimes locked into high-interest financing or lease-to-own contracts. Many families then face unexpected veterinary bills shortly after purchase.</p> <p>As a responsible dog breeder, I stand behind every puppy for life. The broker system does not.</p> <p>HB26-1011 protects consumers and supports ethical breeding practices.</p> <p>Please join me in supporting this bill and vote IN FAVOR of it.</p>
<p>Tracey Frankcom</p> <p>For themselves</p>	<p>Although I'm not a Colorado resident, I have more than 10 years of rescue experience. The issues addressed in HB26-1011 do not stop at state borders. The commercial breeding pipeline that supplies pet store puppies is an interstate system, and Colorado's decisions have national impact.</p> <p>HB26-1011 targets a well-documented problem: the retail sale of dogs and cats from high-volume breeders and brokers. Brokers are the middlemen who keep this pipeline profitable and opaque, which is why closing that channel matters.</p> <p>Opponents claim this bill will harm pet stores, but evidence from other states shows otherwise. Washington enacted a similar restriction in 2021, and its pet retail sector remains healthy and competitive. Most Washington pet stores never relied on selling puppies; they partner with rescues and rely on high-margin services like grooming, training, daycare, boarding, and retail goods. Those stores saw no negative impact when the ban took effect. Their experience shows that pet stores do not need puppy sales to survive, and that moving away from the commercial breeding pipeline is fully compatible with a thriving retail pet economy. HB26-1011 aligns Colorado with a model already proven economically stable.</p> <p>Colorado is not acting alone. Jurisdictions nationwide have adopted similar policies after years of evidence showing that retail puppy sales overwhelmingly rely on large-scale breeders whose practices are difficult to monitor and often harmful. When one state closes the retail pipeline, it reduces demand for breeders shipping animals nationwide. That benefits Colorado consumers and animals, as well as shelters and rescues across the country who continue to absorb the consequences of overbreeding.</p>

	<p>HB26-1011 is a measured, forward-looking policy that strengthens transparency, consumer protection, and humane treatment of animals. Colorado's leadership here matters.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
<p>Monika Fussle-Schoenbeck For themselves</p>	<p>I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills.</p>
<p>Kanada Sorensen For themselves</p>	<p>Please end the cycle of puppy and kitten mills being allowed to sell their animals in Colorado pet stores. These animals are born into and live at facilities with unacceptable conditions: limited to no healthcare, unsanitary cages, no socialization, and overcrowding. Then they are transferred to a pet store. These pet stores then again mistreat them by leaving these poor animals in poorly cleaned areas, are not willing to pay for any healthcare needed, and leave them alone when stores are closed. These animals are just a commodity, the people that own these pet stores don't care about the animal, only the large sums of money they get from the sale. Consumers are so excited to have purchased a new puppy or kitten, however, more often than not, the animal is in poor health and then the new pet owner has to incur large sums of money to nurse their new family addition back to health. Our shelters and rescues are full of animals that need homes, we don't need animals bred for this purpose and then treated so inhumanely. Please vote in favor of HB26-1011 - Transfers of Certain Pet Animals to make this law.</p>
<p>Dana Horne For themselves</p>	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am in favor of this bill HB26-1011, to help to shut down the puppy mill pipeline by prohibiting the sale of puppies and kittens in CO pet stores. I ask the legislature to pass this bill for the following reasons, which are only several of many to consider;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Puppies and kittens are shipped over state lines and sold in pet stores for thousands of dollars. Pet parents are bred in large-scale commercial breeders, the parents live a sad life of breeding for profit.</li> <li>2.It's impossible to see first-hand the conditions of the parents. The pet store's primary intention is profit.</li> <li>3.If a consumer wants a dog from a breeder, there are reputable breeders locally where they are able to meet the parents of the pet and see the conditions they live in.</li> </ol>

<p>Jill Steele For themselves</p>	<p>Dogs that are sold in pet stores come from puppy mills. The abuse put on them is unfair, unethical, and inhumane. They are bred in cages and get little comfort and no human socialization or petting. It's absolutely horrific. Dogs are our best friends and should be treated as such. Shut down the puppy mill pipeline coming into Colorado for good!</p>
<p>Caryn Linn For themselves</p>	<p>I can't believe there are still puppy mills allowed anywhere in the US. This is a barbaric practice and must be stopped. I don't live in Colorado, but I'm in support of this bill. The dogs are not treated properly and are only considered a commodity. This must stop. Please support this bill all the way through until no puppy mills are allowed!</p>
<p>Phil Cozzie Against themselves</p>	<p>Just before the start of this legislative session, the Democratic party held a press conference highlighting their priorities for this session. Senate President James Coleman said Democrats are "focused on growing Colorado's economy and meeting the moment to make life better for all Coloradans." This bill destroys small businesses that contribute tax revenue and jobs to the economy and will make life very difficult for those Coloradans who work for them. When facing a budget deficit of the magnitude Colorado is facing, shuttering small business doesn't seem prudent or wise. House Majority Leader Monica Duran and this bill's sponsor, stated, "Colorado Democrats are laser-focused on this session to pass legislation that will drive down costs for housing, health care, energy bills and childcare." If that is the laser focus as she promised, then the inordinate amount of time spent on destroying 7 small businesses is not supportive of that mission. House Speaker Julie McCluskie stated, "This is our moment to make sure that Colorado remains the fortress that it is in protecting people's rights, people's liberties, and people's freedoms." Just over a month ago, Governor Polis proudly posted on his Facebook page, "In Colorado, we protect freedoms. We don't roll them back." In his state of the state address just recently on January 15, the Governor said, "Today, we're called upon to ensure Colorado remains a leading state for artificial intelligence, for consumers, for businesses of all sizes." This bill strips Coloradans of the rights of choice, freedom and liberty of consumers to choose where they are patrons, and the freedom and liberty of business owners to operate a legal, reputable retail establishment. It destroys the ideal that Colorado is a leading place for consumer choice and businesses of all sizes. Please vote no on this bill, upholding the promises of your leadership.</p>
<p>Courtney Geiger Against themselves</p>	<p>Please protect these animals from being abused by people seeing these living creatures as a money making idea. It's horrendous and unnecessary.</p>
<p>Donna Joywalker Against themselves</p>	<p>Please stop the puppy mill operations now</p>

<p>Sherri Wolfe For themselves</p>	<p>Please stop the sale of puppy mill pets being sold in pet stores. I live in PA where the problem with mills is rampant, though we are working on making it better. We all know the problems with these mills. There needs to be better oversight &amp; stricter penalties in ALL states, because potential pet owners will travel to find their "perfect pet." My brother went to GA for his dog, only to bring her home &amp; find she had health problems despite the fact the breeder's "veterinarian" said she was healthy. Luckily, her problems were treatable &amp; she's doing well. A lot of pet stores in PA have started adoption days where they partner with rescues to show available rescue animals, which is a wonderful idea to help the overpopulation of shelter animals.</p>
<p>Jill Evans For themselves</p>	<p>Though I live outside of Colorado, I'm writing to ask for support of a bill that ends the selling of dogs in pet stores. Puppy mills that supply the stores are known for housing animals in cruel, unsanitary &amp; just horrible conditions. Stopping the sale of animals from such conditions will help the animals and the people impacted by the often long lasting negative health problems those pets suffer.</p> <p>It will also put a damper on the puppy mill pipeline that ships those pets to areas outside of Colorado.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
<p>Adrian Voss For themselves</p>	<p>On behalf of all living beings, please stop selling cats and dogs in pet stores. This would be a great start! And a monumental step toward creating more equity in the lives of all kinds. As we all know, cats and dogs play an important role in our lives. They sense when we are sad or happy. They sense when we need attention. They feel us. Breeding animals and keeping them in cages to trade or "sell" is not what they or we deserve. I rescued my now-passed dog, Kiwi, through National Mill Dog Rescue. The dogs they rescue are in horrible states, most of whom have lived in the dark and in cages. They are used and not seen, though they have a heart just like you and me.</p>
<p>Sarah Swanty For Animal Friends Alliance</p>	<p>Animal Friends Alliance supports HB26-1011. It is time that as a society we stop allowing the horrifying puppy mill trade. Coloradoans love pets, let's prove it.</p>
<p>Marguerite Elfstrom For themselves</p>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.</p> <p>I would like to address the impact that commercial, transaction-based pet acquisition can have on the human-animal bond. Evidence discussed in peer-reviewed research, including findings published in the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central, suggests that when animals are obtained primarily through on-demand, commercial transactions, the relationship that follows may be less deeply rooted in empathy and mutual understanding.</p>

	<p>When the process of acquiring a pet prioritizes speed and consumer convenience, it can unintentionally reduce the sense of shared responsibility and emotional investment that often develops through adoption or through navigating challenges together. Animals obtained in this way may be viewed more as commodities than as sentient beings with individual needs, histories, and vulnerabilities.</p> <p>In contrast, bonds formed through adoption or through circumstances that require patience, adjustment, and mutual trust tend to foster a stronger, more enduring connection. These relationships encourage caregivers to learn an animal’s behavioral cues, emotional needs, and health requirements over time, leading to better welfare outcomes for the animal and a more meaningful relationship for the human.</p> <p>For these reasons, I urge this body to consider how commercial pet sales models may influence not only animal welfare, but also the quality of care and commitment animals receive once they enter a home.</p> <p>Thank you for considering this perspective.</p>
<p>Andie Cogswell For themselves</p>	<p>I support HB26-1011. I'm against puppy mills.</p>
<p>virginia schetter For themselves</p>	<p>We have overcrowded shelters and rescues that need us. We do not want to support puppy mills.</p>
<p>Noel Darby For themselves</p>	<p>I have been very actively volunteering with pet rescues in Colorado for the past 7 years and have witnessed the effects of the kitten and puppy mills that sell to pet stores. The pet parents live in less than ideal conditions and are used as veritable machines; the babies are often less than healthy and even exhibit physical and behavioral issues that are the result of inbreeding. Mill owners regard pets only as a means of cash flow and dump the parents when their usefulness has been expended. (We adopted a puppy mill reject.) God created cats and dogs with the capacity to live with and love humans unlike other animals, and they deserve humane treatment and protections. Consider the thousands of cats and dogs in Colorado who do not have home. Don't they deserve a chance to be adopted before out-of-state mills start flooding our cities and towns with pets they don't care about in the first place?</p>
<p>Lisa Cirincione</p>	<p>I volunteer with the Colorado rescue, Mile High Canine Rescue and it is heartbreaking to see so many unnecessary euthanasias of healthy dogs, many of</p>

For themselves	them who were purchased from breeders. We have too many dogs dying and this bill will close the incentive for breeders to sell their dogs in pet stores. Please pass this bill so more dogs will live.
Kathy Dalton Against themselves	The sale of cats and dogs in pet stores from puppy mills is defeating of everything I do. I work with an animal rescue who sees so many cats and dogs who cannot find homes because there are more of them than loving homes ready to take them. Adding animals via puppy mills adds to the frustration and numbers of animals looking for homes.
Franciaco Farias Against themselves	I do not think that is good for anyone. This does not prevent the problem. Backyard breeders. The pet stores source animals from reputable breeders and they also educate the public as well as provide a friendly environment that is well regulated to purchase animals prevented people from buying from side street deals or being lied to be shelters who are trying to find homes for animals. Both shelters and pet stores are important
Shaye Halpert For themselves	. By cutting off these retail outlets, communities can curb the demand for animals bred in high-volume, commercial facilities where they are often subjected to overcrowding, lack of veterinary care, and psychological trauma. These bans not only protect consumers from the emotional and financial burden of purchasing sick pets with congenital disorders but also encourage a shift toward adoption from local shelters and rescues.
Joni Amaral For themselves	I do not live in Colorado however the sale of pets particularly dogs in CO affect all states as people purchase them there and move. These dogs used to breeding are frequently abused and the health of the animals sold is often inferior leading owners to not be able to afford their medical care. Please stop puppy mills as it is not humane and the shelters are impacted by this as they often end up there. The poor animals bred out of such cruelty suffer and the dogs which breed them even more so. It's our duty to protect animals which have no voice and I hope CO stands on the side of these animals and ends puppy mills with this bill.
Kelly Nix For themselves	I support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills.
DIANNE HOLLAND For themselves	I fully support this bill to end the sale of dogs and cats in Colorado pet stores.  The no kill shelters are full of dogs and cats waiting to be adopted. This is true for all breeds of dogs and cats, as well as mixed breeds. Any responsible breeder (very few exist) will have their litters sold before they breed their dog.

	<p>I do trap, spay, neuter release for feral cats and have been doing this for decades. People all want a kitten or puppy but then they want to get rid of them--it's very sad.</p> <p>The pet stores profiting off of these puppy mills who supply them with the puppies need to be stopped. Stopping these stores from selling them will give less of an incentive for backyard breeders and puppy mills to supply these stores.</p> <p>I live next to a puppy mill. They asked the county to give them permission to breed 50 litters per year. The county denied their request, unless they agreed to build a huge barn for shelter for the puppies and dogs. They didn't built the shelter, but now they have multiple pens, with dogs fenced in small enclosures where they appear to be going crazy. They bark continuously and these dogs are not exercised. I live next door to this so I can see they are given very little attention. The people see them only as money makers and don't care about them. It's extremely sad.</p> <p>Please do the right thing and pass this bill and end this cruelty. There are plenty of dogs and cats including puppies and kittens available at the numerous overrun shelters and humane societies.</p>
<p>Diane Bartko For themselves</p>	<p>â€œI support HB26-1011. Please ban puppy mills.â€</p>
<p>Name, Position, Representing</p>	<p>Typed Text of Testimony</p>
<p>Cynthia Petsch For themselves</p>	<p>I have been volunteering for an animal rescue and am concerned about animal welfare. It is important to pass this bill.</p>
<p>Marelise Beckmann For themselves</p>	<p>Yes on HB26-2011. Please Ban Puppy Mills.  Sincerely Denver resident and Concerned citizen, Marelise A. Beckmann</p>
<p>Erin Marquardt For themselves</p>	<p>I am for this bill. Pet stores and puppy mills do not care for the pets I've purchased pets at pet stores and they were unhealthy. Some suffered, one almost died. They are sentient beings and deserve to be treated well. Adopt, don't shop. (Correction: I am in support of this bill).</p>

<p>T Hess For street tails advocacy</p>	<p>Colorado General Assembly House Agriculture, Water &amp; Natural Resources Committee Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 26-1011 Concerning the Transfer of Pet Animals Submitted by: City of Residence: City, Colorado Date: 21 February 2026  Chair and Members of the Committee,  I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 26-1011. This important legislation will prohibit the retail sale of dogs and cats through pet stores and brokers in Colorado while preserving adoption through shelters and rescues and allowing direct sales from responsible breeders. This bill addresses a well-documented animal welfare and consumer protection issue and represents a necessary step toward ending the commercial puppy mill pipeline.  Commercial puppy mills are large-scale breeding facilities that prioritize profit over animal welfare. Dogs in these facilities are often confined to overcrowded cages, denied adequate veterinary care, and subjected to repeated breeding that results in serious medical and behavioral problems. Retail pet stores and brokers provide a critical sales outlet that allows these operations to remain profitable while concealing the origin and conditions in which animals are bred. Cutting off this retail pipeline is one of the most effective ways to reduce the demand that sustains these inhumane operations.  Retail pet sales also pose significant risks to Colorado consumers. Families often purchase puppies without full transparency regarding their origin, health, or genetic background, resulting in costly veterinary care, emotional distress, and financial hardship. By eliminating retail sales while preserving responsible breeder and adoption pathways, House Bill 26-1011 protects consumers while promoting ethical and transparent pet acquisition.  Colorado communities have already recognized the importance of addressing this issue. Numerous municipalities have enacted local restrictions on retail pet sales, reflecting strong public support for policies that protect animals and consumers. House Bill 26-1011 would establish consistent statewide protections and ensure that Colorado does not continue to serve as a destination for commercially bred animals from large-scale breeding operations.  My support for this bill is also grounded in firsthand experience. As a foster caregiver, I have worked directly with vulnerable cats and kittens, including neonates, undersocialized and semi-feral cats, and others requiring intensive care and rehabilitation.</p>
<p>Kelli Brannon For</p>	<p>I live in NC but puppy mills affect all states in interstate commerce and so it's all connected. One state shutting them down has far reaching impacts in other states.</p>

themselves	Animals are sentient beings and should always be treated with the upmost care and respect.
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House Majority Leader, Monica Duran

Rep. Karen McComick

Senate Majority Leader, Robert Rodriguez

I was born in Colorado 89 years ago. I was always proud to see businesses succeed and to bring economy to the state. I am concerned as to why you want to remove business that not only bring revenue to the state but brings employment as well.

This is in reference to HB26-1011, I don't understand the position of closing the businesses that handle pets. There are regulations that are set to regulate said businesses already in place. If a business is complying with the regulations. Why do you want to close the business? If a business does not comply with the regulations, then I understand. But if it's not infraction of any laws, why have its doors closed.

My question is: "Is there a prejudice against such business?" I think that you would appreciate the revenue it brings into the state. It's not just the money, but the care and treatment the pets receive at the Pet Store. I am sure the store keeps track of when and where they got the pets that they sell. I know that this store keeps such records as well as where they purchased the pets from. That it's not just a puppy mill operation.

I am certain that the pet store has its State Inspections to see how it is operated and the pets cared for. If no violations are found, what is the issue?

Thank you,

Albert E Kimminau

Colorado General Assembly  
House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources Committee

**Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 26-1011**  
Concerning the Transfer of Pet Animals

Submitted by: Rachael Dinger  
City of Residence: Fort Collins, Colorado  
Date: 21 February 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 26-1011. This important legislation will prohibit the retail sale of dogs and cats through pet stores and brokers in Colorado while preserving adoption through shelters and rescues and allowing direct sales from responsible breeders. This bill addresses a well-documented animal welfare and consumer protection issue and represents a necessary step toward ending the commercial puppy mill pipeline.

My support for this bill is deeply personal. I adopted my cat, Tom, from a local humane society. He was a sweet, affectionate companion, and from the moment I brought him home, he was part of my family. Based on the limited background information available and conversations at the time of adoption, we believe Tom originally came from a pet store before entering the shelter system.

Tom began experiencing urinary issues when he was still very young. Despite ongoing veterinary treatment and significant emotional and financial investment, he developed severe bladder complications and passed away at just three years old.

Losing Tom was heartbreaking. Beyond the grief, I was left with serious questions about his early life—how he had been bred, transported, and housed before he ever reached the humane society. Retail pet sales often involve limited transparency about an animal's origin and early care. Families may unknowingly adopt or purchase animals with underlying genetic vulnerabilities or health conditions linked to irresponsible breeding and inadequate early medical oversight.

Commercial breeding facilities prioritize profit over animal welfare. Animals in these facilities are often confined in overcrowded conditions, denied adequate veterinary care, and subjected to repeated breeding. Retail pet stores and brokers serve as a critical sales outlet that allows these operations to continue while obscuring the true conditions in which animals are bred. Cutting off this retail pipeline is one of the most effective ways to reduce demand and discourage inhumane practices.

Retail pet sales also pose significant risks to Colorado consumers. Families often bring home pets without full transparency regarding their origin, health background, or breeding conditions, resulting in costly veterinary care and emotional distress. By eliminating retail sales while

preserving responsible breeder and adoption pathways, House Bill 26-1011 protects consumers while promoting ethical and transparent pet acquisition.

House Bill 26-1011 presents a balanced, humane, and effective solution. It does not prohibit responsible breeding or pet ownership. Instead, it targets the commercial retail system that enables large-scale breeding operations while preserving ethical pathways for acquiring companion animals.

Passing this bill will:

- Reduce animal suffering
- Protect Colorado consumers
- Support shelters and rescues
- Promote responsible breeding practices
- Reduce shelter overcrowding and resource strain
- Align Colorado with proven, humane public policy

Colorado has long been a leader in animal welfare. Passing House Bill 26-1011 will strengthen consumer protections, reduce animal suffering, and help prevent other families from experiencing the loss and heartbreak that mine did.

I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 26-1011.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Rachael Dinger

February 22,2026

RE: HB26-1011

My name is Ellen Miller and I am a long-time resident of Fort Collins. I am a retired veterinary specialist in internal medicine. I have worked at Colorado State University on faculty in the veterinary school in addition to owning my own practice and consulting for a national veterinary diagnostic laboratory.

My opinion on pet store puppies will be purely from a health perspective. I have included several peer-reviewed papers regarding the health of pet store puppies sourced from commercial breeding facilities.

Dogs have diseases of genetic origin just as humans do. These genetic diseases range from neurological issues to orthopedic issues to something as simple as allergies. Some of these diseases are costly to repair (total hip replacement for hip dysplasia) while others require chronic, often expensive therapy (allergies) and others may be deadly (hydrocephalus). Scientific advancement has led to our ability to test for genetic diseases. However, even before that, it was common sense to use only healthy animals for breeding purposes. At least two practices of commercial dog breeders predispose to an increase in congenital/hereditary abnormalities in offspring. Commercial dog breeders often inbreed (for instance, breeding a mother to her son). I will not get into the nitty gritty of genetics but I am sure you have heard of hybrid vigor. With inbreeding, there is a loss of vigor and an increase in genetic diseases. Because commercial breeders try to save money, they do not do genetic testing to determine the true health status of their breeding stock. Additionally, the breeder never gets feedback about genetic diseases of the puppies they sell because the family that purchases the puppy only can take action at the pet store level. An extensive report summarizing almost 2500 puppy buyer complaints noted a 34% incidence of congenital defects in pet store puppies.

In the puppy pipeline from commercial breeder to pet store, there are brokers that purchase puppies from several facilities and transport them all together to various pet stores. These puppies are often taken away from their mothers at 6 weeks of age (the legal age in Colorado is 8 weeks per PACFA rule 18.4). As one might guess, the puppies do not have a full set of vaccines nor a competent immune system at this age. Mixing puppies from different facilities at a critical time in their lives is a perfect storm for transmission of diseases. The exact number of puppies that die in transport is unknown. Infectious diseases are common in the surviving puppies acquired from commercial breeders. The scope of this letter could not begin to cover all the infectious diseases that are important. I will include diseases that have come to the forefront in veterinary medicine recently.

Brucellosis is an infectious disease of many animal species, including dogs and cattle. The bacteria is transmitted primarily through sexual contact but can be transmitted to puppies through nursing. It is considered a zoonosis, i.e., it can be transmitted from dogs to people. *Brucella* causes abortion and stillbirths in dogs as well as fever and inflammation of the vertebrae and eyes. In humans, *Brucella* causes fever, weight loss, joint pain and headaches. If untreated it can lead to infection in the heart and nervous system. **Johnson et al concluded *Brucella canis* was**

**uncommon in purebred dogs being bred by noncommercial breeders but endemic in Michigan commercial facilities producing dogs destined to become household pets. Infected pet dogs caused human *B canis* exposure, and several pet dogs had debilitating disease not associated with the reproductive system. (*J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2018;253:322–336)**

Campylobacter is a bacterial intestinal infection in many species. In the U.S. Campylobacter is the most common bacterial cause of diarrhea. In 2017, several people were diagnosed with Campylobacter infections after contact with puppies from a pet store. The Center for Disease Control initiated a national outbreak investigation. Their conclusion was: **Strains of extensively drug-resistant *Campylobacter jejuni* have been circulating since at least 2011 and are associated with illness among pet store customers, employees, and others who come into contact with pet store puppies. The results of this study suggest that practitioners should ask about puppy exposure when treating patients with *Campylobacter* infection, especially when they do not improve with routine antibiotics, and that the commercial dog industry should take action to help prevent the spread of extensively drug-resistant *C jejuni* from pet store puppies to people. (*JAMA Network Open*. 2021;4(9):e2125203).**

Canine Distemper is a deadly viral infection in dogs. It is uncommon in most parts of the U.S. largely because of preventative vaccination. In 2010, canine distemper was confirmed in 24 puppies in 4 towns in Wyoming. Affected puppies originated from 2 Wyoming pet stores. The majority of the puppies came from a single breeding facility in Kansas and were imported into Wyoming without veterinary health certificates. Summary of investigation: **The breeding property from which the puppies originated was quarantined by the Kansas Animal Health Department. Puppies intended for sale were tested for CDV. Canine distemper was diagnosed on site in November 2010. At that point 1,466 dogs were euthanized to eliminate dispersal of the disease through commercial channels. The investigation underscores the risks inherent in large-scale dog breeding when vaccination and biosecurity practices are suboptimal. (*Journal of Veterinary Diagnostic Investigation* 24(6) 1094–1098).**

As a veterinarian, I have seen many dogs purchased from pet stores debilitated by genetic diseases. Often thousands of dollars will be required for appropriate veterinary care. I have also seen the heart break of families that just purchased their new family member from a pet store only to make the difficult decision to euthanize the puppy because they are unable to afford treatment. Puppy health should be a guarantee not a luck of the draw. Unfortunately, when purchasing a puppy from a pet store, its origin is a commercial breeding facility. The love and care that our furry children deserve does not exist in those facilities.

Please take this letter into consideration when making your decision on HB26-1011. Colorado residents deserve healthy, happy pets.

Sincerely,

Ellen Miller, DVM, MS Diplomate ACVIM (Small Animal Internal Medicine)

[ellendvm@msn.com](mailto:ellendvm@msn.com) 970-281-9078

I strongly support this bill. “Puppy mills” are a hideously cruel industry that rely on our natural compassion for dogs and cats in order to make money. Cats and dogs are bred into crowded, filthy conditions, and then killed if they are not sold. On top of that, if an animal IS successfully sold, it means that one more animal in already existing shelters will NOT be adopted instead—so an animal always dies somewhere, whether or not the animal bred is successfully sold. Our animal shelters already can’t support all the abandoned animals in this country. Puppy mills always create suffering to animals and callousness in humans.

Keith Akers  
2865 S. Gilpin St., Denver, CO 80210  
303-300-2368

The business of breeding and selling dogs and cats cannot be reformed. Animal shelters are already overflowing with dogs and cats, including dogs and cats of many popular breeds. Even if the dog or cat is treated humanely and the animal is sold, that just means that another animal in a reputable shelter will have to be euthanized because it won't be adopted. This just teaches our children and the public that animals don't matter. Please support this bill so that this practice will end.

Kate Lawrence  
2865 S. Gilpin St., Denver, CO 80210  
303-300-2368

FROM: Mary Roberts

[mary@sideporchstories.com](mailto:mary@sideporchstories.com)

970-227-9806

RE: HB26-1011

My name is Mary Roberts, and I am one of the founders of Colorado Citizens for Canine Welfare (3CW). We are dedicated to educating the public about the dangers of puppy mills and their connection to pet stores. I have also rescued many dogs over many years, some from puppy mills who were used as breeder dogs.

I wrote a book about my life with these dogs. It's called *14 Dogs and Me—One Woman's Story of Never Saying No*.

I was one of the activists who met with Fort Collins City Council members individually and testified at a number of meetings when the puppy mill ban was on the agenda.

A major influence on my decision to spend much of my time on this issue was the story of Jeff Fortin who had over 1400 dogs in his Kansas facility in 2010. He delivered a number of pups with distemper to pet stores in Wyoming and was consequently unable to afford his staff or to feed the dogs when it was discovered that his facility was the origin of the devastating disease. He had previously decided to skip distemper vaccinations. He and his family have been in the puppy mill business for over 40 years. He knew better. He had been fined \$8k in 2006 and received notice of many more violations but was never shut down. He killed all 1400 dogs. Again, he knew better. Fortin is not a "bad apple, or an "outlier." He may be one of the worst but the others aren't much better.

I wrote the following letter to Fort Collins City Council members when they were considering passing the ban. They had requested "objective" information about puppy mills. This is my response with edits.

February 9, 2024

*Council member Pignataro said she wanted to find out what could be done locally to end commercial breeding facilities. In their discussion, council members said before acting on anything, they would like to get **objective** information on puppy mills and their impact on Fort Collins pet stores.—Excerpt from a list of priorities set by City Council*

Dear Council members,

If you find someone who can be objective about the conditions in large scale commercial breeder farms, aka puppy mills, they are either inspectors who are hardened to suffering or they haven't done the work of research and investigation.

But I'm taking up the challenge. In this email, I have included links to organizations that have been investigating and researching the conditions at puppy mills for many years. You may say they are not "objective." But that doesn't mean their videos and facts and numbers are not true. If you are serious about knowing more about this issue, you will need to explore these sites more thoroughly.

We can be passionate about an issue without being dismissed for what we have to say. Personally, I've been researching this issue since I got my Toy Fox Terrier at Pet City twenty-three years ago.

I recommend you watch the *Dog-by-Dog* documentary that traces the efforts of an organization to pass more stringent regulations in specific states but have been stymied by Big Ag and other organizations within the pet industry. It is a must-see for anyone wanting to understand this issue.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENmRxN3j\\_tU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENmRxN3j_tU)

The following quote is from Karen Kinnes, manager of Pet City in Fort Collins.

**“We do not feel we deserve to be singled out and eliminated simply because of misinformation about our business.”**

First, Pet City can change to the humane business model. Second, the only “misinformation” I can see is in Karen's letter. Pet City supports an abusive industry by sourcing their animals from puppy mills, one of them owned by the former Pet City owner Rebecca Mosshart.

Words like “strict,” “strictly,” “regularly,” “highly selective,” and “vigorous inspection” are not accurate. The existing laws are far from strict. And USDA-licensed facilities are rarely inspected more than once a year. Below is a link to a You Tube video of a southern CO puppy mill owner showing an inspector his set up. The violations noted in the video are not reported. This is a typical inspection.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Au-rdMDsvA>

**“In other cases they need a dog with a known temperament that can be around young children or other pets.”—Karen Kinnes.**

Pet stores do not have the ability to assess a dog’s temperament. Pet stores want their “product” out the door as soon as possible. Ask them how often they have vet checks.

Please check out the following sites. These organizations have been working in the field for at least 30 years. Are they objective? I’m not sure anyone is objective when you work in the field rescuing animals from dire situations. Are all puppy mills bad? Some may be cleaner than others but the very fact that hundreds of dogs are kept in small cages for the purpose of making money is antithetical to the canine/human bond. Our best friends don’t deserve that.

1. Bailing Out Benji  
<https://bailingoutbenji.com/>
  2. CO Citizens for Canine Welfare  
<https://caninewelfare.org/>
  3. C.A.P.S.  
<https://caninewelfare.org/>  
They have extensive videos and reports of their investigations of pet stores and puppy mills.
  4. HSUS Puppy Mill Campaign  
<https://www.humanesociety.org/all-our-fights/stopping-puppy-mills>
  5. Best Friends Sanctuary  
<https://bestfriends.org/>
  6. ASPCA  
[https://secure.asPCA.org/take-action/usda-bfl?ms=wb\\_con\\_take-action-usda-puppy-mills-20200415&initialms=wb\\_con\\_take-action-usda-puppy-mills-20200415](https://secure.asPCA.org/take-action/usda-bfl?ms=wb_con_take-action-usda-puppy-mills-20200415&initialms=wb_con_take-action-usda-puppy-mills-20200415)
- Read *Rescue Dogs* by Pete Paxton. He was a puppy mill undercover investigator for 30 years and worked for several puppy mills. He always portrayed them sympathetically but ultimately his loyalty was with the dogs who were suffering under the owners’ care.
  - Talk to a veterinarian who has had experience with pet store puppies and not the vets who Pet City tell you to go to.
  - Go on a road trip and visit a puppy mill unannounced if you can find it. But their properties are posted with No Trespassing so be careful.

I’ve only given you a tiny fraction of the information available out there.

I realize for some of you nothing will move you to pass an ordinance that would ban the sale of puppy mill dogs and cats in retail pet shops. Maybe you think the suffering is overblown or that “things” are better. Maybe you don’t want to tell a long-time business what to sell or not sell in their store. Maybe you think the ordinance wouldn’t do much to impact puppy mills.

Five hundred local jurisdictions and eight states have done it. And many more will. You can put this aside saying you “just don’t know.” But you do know.

Here is some “light” reading:

1. *The Need for Environmental Regulation of Puppy Mills*—Villanova University with 2 pages of resources and references.
2. *Behavioral Characteristics of Pet Store Dogs vs. Noncommercial Breeders*—Journal of American Veterinarian Medical Association
3. *An Examination of a Large-Scale Commercial Breeder and a Distemper Outbreak*—Journal of Veterinarian Diagnostic Investigation. Please read the last 2 paragraphs.
4. LA Times Article on Jeff Fortin, KS Commercial Breeder who had a Distemper Outbreak which affected pet stores in WY.
5. *Ongoing Outbreak of Campylobacter Infection in US Pet Stores*—Journal of American Medical Association.
6. *Mental Health of Former Breeding Stock Dogs in Commercial Kennels*—Journal of Applied Animal Science Behavior

There are scientific papers put out by universities with vet schools. They detail studies on the negative effects on puppies and breeder dogs living in puppy mills and pet stores. But, again, this is the Ag Committee, and I venture to guess many of you already know the conditions at puppy mills and the consequences for dogs who spend many years as breeder dogs. I also assume you know what happens to many of the pups who are raised there then trucked to various areas in the US.

Big Ag wants you to think that this is a slippery slope to regulating farm animals. Hopefully we are concerned with their welfare and treatment, too. But dogs have been our companions for possibly 40,000 years and should not be labeled as livestock nor treated as such.

I find it shameful that we have consigned dogs to such horrendous living conditions and treatment.

If you have researched the puppy mill issues at all, you will know how you must vote.

Sincerely,

Mary Roberts

**Colorado General Assembly**  
**House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources Committee**

**Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 26-1011**  
**Concerning the Transfer of Pet Animals**

**Submitted by:** Tamara Golden

**City of Residence:** Colorado Springs, Colorado

**Date:** 21 February 2026

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Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 26-1011. This important legislation will prohibit the retail sale of dogs and cats through pet stores and brokers in Colorado while preserving adoption through shelters and rescues and allowing direct sales from responsible breeders. This bill addresses a well-documented animal welfare and consumer protection issue and represents a necessary step toward ending the commercial puppy mill pipeline.

Commercial puppy mills are large-scale breeding facilities that prioritize profit over animal welfare. Dogs in these facilities are often confined to overcrowded cages, denied adequate veterinary care, and subjected to repeated breeding that results in serious medical and behavioral problems. Retail pet stores and brokers provide a critical sales outlet that allows these operations to remain profitable while concealing the origin and conditions in which animals are bred. Cutting off this retail pipeline is one of the most effective ways to reduce the demand that sustains these inhumane operations.

Retail pet sales also pose significant risks to Colorado consumers. Families often purchase puppies without full transparency regarding their origin, health, or genetic background, resulting in costly veterinary care, emotional distress, and financial hardship. By eliminating retail sales while preserving responsible breeder and adoption pathways, House Bill 26-1011 protects consumers while promoting ethical and transparent pet acquisition.

Colorado communities have already recognized the importance of addressing this issue. Numerous municipalities have enacted local restrictions on retail pet sales, reflecting strong public support for policies that protect animals and consumers. House Bill 26-1011 would establish consistent statewide protections and ensure that Colorado does not continue to serve as a destination for commercially bred animals from large-scale breeding operations.

My support for this bill is also grounded in first and secondhand experience. As a friend of a foster caregiver, she has worked directly with vulnerable cats and kittens, including neonates, undersocialized and semi-feral cats, and others requiring intensive care and rehabilitation. She has provided medical support, socialization, and safe housing to animals that would otherwise have little chance of survival or adoption (36 last year alone). I have also participated in trap-neuter-return efforts to prevent future suffering and reduce overpopulation (I currently have 2 TNR ferals whom I shelter and feed).

Through her work, I have seen and heard of the consequences of overbreeding and the strain it places on shelters, rescues, and communities. Every animal sold through a commercial retail pipeline contributes to the broader overpopulation crisis, increasing the number of animals in shelters and placing additional pressure on already limited resources. Preventing irresponsible breeding and retail sales is essential to reducing this burden and improving outcomes for animals statewide.

House Bill 26-1011 represents a balanced, humane, and effective solution. It does not prohibit responsible breeding or pet ownership. Instead, it targets the commercial retail system that enables large-scale breeding operations while preserving ethical pathways for acquiring companion animals.

Passing this bill will:

- Reduce animal suffering
- Protect Colorado consumers
- Support shelters and rescues
- Promote responsible breeding practices
- Reduce shelter overcrowding and resource strain
- Align Colorado with proven, humane public policy

Colorado has long been a leader in animal welfare. Passing House Bill 26-1011 will strengthen consumer protections, reduce animal suffering, and ensure a more humane and responsible system for companion animals in our state.

I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 26-1011.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tamara Golden

Colorado Springs, Colorado

tamsonrevg@comcast.net

719-648-2665

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## References

1. Colorado General Assembly. House Bill 26-1011: Concerning the transfer of pet animals. 2026.
2. Animal Rights Coalition. Puppy Mills Fact Sheet. 2025.
3. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Ending Retail Puppy Sales and Standing Against Puppy Mill Cruelty.
4. Best Friends Animal Society. Combating Puppy Mills: Ending the Puppy Mill Pipeline.
5. Humane World for Animals. The Puppy Mill Pipeline and Retail Pet Sales in the United States.

**Colorado General Assembly**  
**House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources Committee**

**Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 26-1011**  
**Concerning the Transfer of Pet Animals**

**Submitted by:** Elizabeth R Scott

**City of Residence:** Denver, Colorado

**Date:** 22 February 2026

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Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 26-1011. This important legislation will prohibit the retail sale of dogs and cats through pet stores and brokers in Colorado while preserving adoption through shelters and rescues and allowing direct sales from responsible breeders. This bill addresses a well-documented animal welfare and consumer protection issue and represents a necessary step toward ending the commercial puppy mill pipeline.

Commercial puppy mills are large-scale breeding facilities that prioritize profit over animal welfare. Dogs in these facilities are often confined to overcrowded cages, denied adequate veterinary care, and subjected to repeated breeding that results in serious medical and behavioral problems. Retail pet stores and brokers provide a critical sales outlet that allows these operations to remain profitable while concealing the origin and conditions in which animals are bred. Cutting off this retail pipeline is one of the most effective ways to reduce the demand that sustains these inhumane operations.

Retail pet sales also pose significant risks to Colorado consumers. Families often purchase puppies without full transparency regarding their origin, health, or genetic background, resulting in costly veterinary care, emotional distress, and financial hardship. By eliminating retail sales while preserving responsible breeder and adoption pathways, House Bill 26-1011 protects consumers while promoting ethical and transparent pet acquisition.

Colorado communities have already recognized the importance of addressing this issue. Numerous municipalities have enacted local restrictions on retail pet sales, reflecting strong public support for policies that protect animals and consumers. House Bill 26-1011 would establish consistent statewide protections and ensure that Colorado does not continue to serve as a destination for commercially bred animals from large-scale breeding operations.

My support for this bill is also grounded in firsthand experience. As a foster caregiver, I have worked directly with vulnerable cats and kittens, dogs and puppies, undersocialized and semi-feral cats and dogs. I have provided medical support, socialization, and safe housing to animals that would otherwise have little chance of adoption. I have also participated in trap-neuter-return efforts to prevent future suffering and reduce overpopulation.

Through this work, I have seen firsthand the consequences of overbreeding and the strain it places on shelters, rescues, and communities. Every animal sold through a commercial retail pipeline contributes to the broader overpopulation crisis, increasing the number of animals in shelters and placing additional pressure on already limited resources. Preventing irresponsible breeding and retail sales is essential to reducing this burden and improving outcomes for animals statewide.

House Bill 26-1011 represents a balanced, humane, and effective solution. It does not prohibit responsible breeding or pet ownership. Instead, it targets the commercial retail system that enables large-scale breeding operations while preserving ethical pathways for acquiring companion animals.

Passing this bill will:

- Reduce animal suffering
- Protect Colorado consumers
- Support shelters and rescues
- Promote responsible breeding practices
- Reduce shelter overcrowding and resource strain
- Align Colorado with proven, humane public policy

Colorado has long been a leader in animal welfare. Passing House Bill 26-1011 will strengthen consumer protections, reduce animal suffering, and ensure a more humane and responsible system for companion animals in our state.

I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 26-1011.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth R Scott  
Denver, Colorado

elizabethscott05@gmail.com

720-353-1511

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## References

1. Colorado General Assembly. House Bill 26-1011: Concerning the transfer of pet animals. 2026.
2. Animal Rights Coalition. Puppy Mills Fact Sheet. 2025.
3. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Ending Retail Puppy Sales and Standing Against Puppy Mill Cruelty.
4. Best Friends Animal Society. Combating Puppy Mills: Ending the Puppy Mill Pipeline.
5. Humane World for Animals. The Puppy Mill Pipeline and Retail Pet Sales in the United States.

**Colorado General Assembly**  
**House Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources Committee**

**Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 26-1011**  
**Concerning the Transfer of Pet Animals**

**Submitted by:** Jennifer Strotman

**City of Residence:** Aurora, Colorado

**Date:** 21 February 2026

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Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 26-1011. This important legislation will prohibit the retail sale of dogs and cats through pet stores and brokers in Colorado while preserving adoption through shelters and rescues and allowing direct sales from responsible breeders. This bill addresses a well-documented animal welfare and consumer protection issue and represents a necessary step toward ending the commercial puppy mill pipeline.

Commercial puppy mills are large-scale breeding facilities that prioritize profit over animal welfare. Dogs in these facilities are often confined to overcrowded cages, denied adequate veterinary care, and subjected to repeated breeding that results in serious medical and behavioral problems. Retail pet stores and brokers provide a critical sales outlet that allows these operations to remain profitable while concealing the origin and conditions in which animals are bred. Cutting off this retail pipeline is one of the most effective ways to reduce the demand that sustains these inhumane operations.

Retail pet sales also pose significant risks to Colorado consumers. Families often purchase puppies without full transparency regarding their origin, health, or genetic background, resulting in costly veterinary care, emotional distress, and financial hardship. By eliminating retail sales while preserving responsible breeder and adoption pathways, House Bill 26-1011 protects consumers while promoting ethical and transparent pet acquisition.

Colorado communities have already recognized the importance of addressing this issue. Numerous municipalities have enacted local restrictions on retail pet sales, reflecting strong public support for policies that protect animals and consumers. House Bill 26-1011 would establish consistent statewide protections and ensure that Colorado does not continue to serve as a destination for commercially bred animals from large-scale breeding operations.

My support for this bill is also grounded in firsthand experience. As a foster caregiver, I have worked directly with vulnerable cats and kittens, including neonates, undersocialized and semi-feral cats, and others requiring intensive care and rehabilitation. I have provided medical support, socialization, and safe housing to animals that would otherwise have little chance of survival or adoption (36 last year alone). I have also participated in trap-neuter-return efforts to prevent future suffering and reduce overpopulation (24 in 2025).

Through this work, I have seen firsthand the consequences of overbreeding and the strain it places on shelters, rescues, and communities. Every animal sold through a commercial retail pipeline contributes to the broader overpopulation crisis, increasing the number of animals in shelters and placing additional pressure on already limited resources. Preventing irresponsible breeding and retail sales is essential to reducing this burden and improving outcomes for animals statewide.

House Bill 26-1011 represents a balanced, humane, and effective solution. It does not prohibit responsible breeding or pet ownership. Instead, it targets the commercial retail system that enables large-scale breeding operations while preserving ethical pathways for acquiring companion animals.

Passing this bill will:

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- Reduce shelter overcrowding and resource strain
- Align Colorado with proven, humane public policy

Colorado has long been a leader in animal welfare. Passing House Bill 26-1011 will strengthen consumer protections, reduce animal suffering, and ensure a more humane and responsible system for companion animals in our state.

I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 26-1011.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Strotman  
Aurora, Colorado

StrotmanHousehold@gmail.com

970-531-3131

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## References

1. Colorado General Assembly. House Bill 26-1011: Concerning the transfer of pet animals. 2026.
2. Animal Rights Coalition. Puppy Mills Fact Sheet. 2025.
3. American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Ending Retail Puppy Sales and Standing Against Puppy Mill Cruelty.
4. Best Friends Animal Society. Combating Puppy Mills: Ending the Puppy Mill Pipeline.
5. Humane World for Animals. The Puppy Mill Pipeline and Retail Pet Sales in the United States.

# WHY CLOSING LICENSED PET STORES MISSES THE MARK

## 1. DOESN'T HELP THE ANIMALS

If breeder standards are insufficient, raise them federally.

Fix the problem at its source nationwide instead of targeting regulated Colorado retailers.



## 2. REDUCES ANIMAL PROTECTION

Families will continue seeking puppies of their choice.

Sales will move online and out of state, placing oversight outside Colorado's control and reducing consumer protection.



## 3. LICENSED PET STORES PROVIDE ACCOUNTABILITY

- Routine inspections
- Verified health records
- Transparent sourcing

**This bill would shut down regulated licensed pet stores across Colorado starting January 2027!**





**First Gentleman Marlon Reis**



7 mins · 🌐

Good Day, Friends,

May I ask your assistance with a project I am working on?

I am looking for links to any articles or newscasts featured in local Colorado media outlets in the last year or two, pertaining specifically to instances of pet stores selling sick animals to individuals or families.

If your local newspaper ran a story, or you saw a segment on television news, and you are able to find a link to the story, please post it as a comment below.

I am including a link to use as an example.

I sure appreciate your help, Friends!

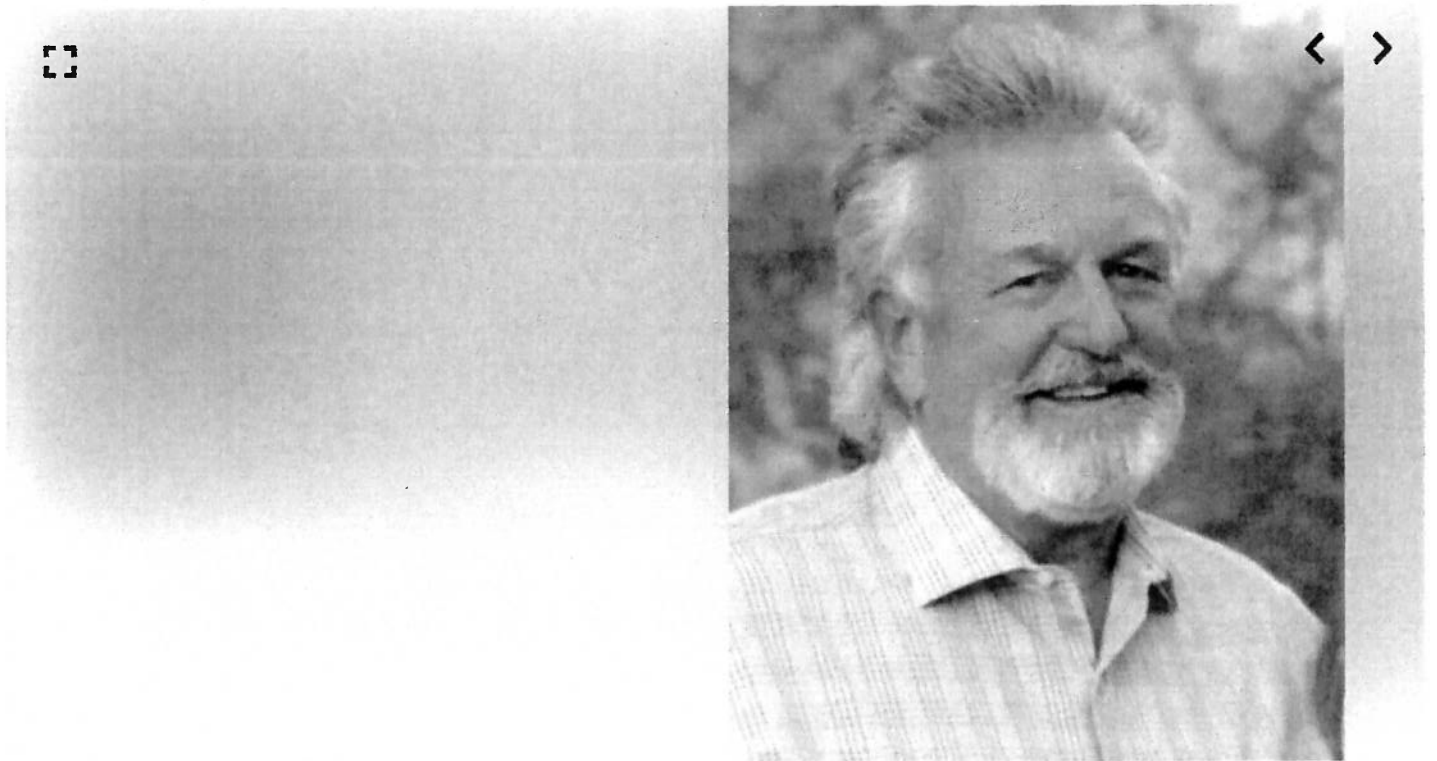
(Note: the link I originally included led to a story about a rescue and not a pet store; I've corrected it. Please share your comments again. Thank you!).

[https://gazette.com/denver-gazette/aurora-council-s-vote-enables-puppy-trafficking/article\\_1073defa-4298-11ee-9a59-37174893471c.html](https://gazette.com/denver-gazette/aurora-council-s-vote-enables-puppy-trafficking/article_1073defa-4298-11ee-9a59-37174893471c.html)

## GUEST COLUMN: Aurora council's vote enables puppy trafficking

By Douglas Johnson  
Aug 25, 2023

1 of 2



Last week the Aurora City Council voted 8-2 to enable the black-market trafficking of puppies and kittens in the city. The council considered and voted on a possibly well-intentioned, but certainly misguided ordinance to ban the retail sales of dogs and cats through licensed, regulated pet stores. The ordinance directs that pet animals can only be acquired from rescues, shelters, or private breeders. This is ostensibly done out of concern for the animals, but unfortunately the real-world impact is the opposite.

Bans like the one voted on in Aurora feed into a persistent but false myth that puppies and kittens sold in pet stores are sourced from “puppy mills,” defined as mass-breeding operations where animals are kept in deplorable conditions and often ill-treated. Several decades ago, that indeed was a problem. Breeding operations often lacked oversight, resulting in unscrupulous and cruel operators taking advantage. Fortunately, years of hard work by the USDA and state governments, the animal welfare community, responsible breeders and the pet store industry paid off, and those types of operations have been purged from the retail pet market, eliminated under the light of regulation, oversight, and inspection. Today, pet stores in Colorado are strictly regulated and licensed under the Pet Animal Care Facilities Act (PACFA) and the USDA, and source exclusively from responsible, humane breeders that are similarly regulated, licensed and inspected by the USDA.

There are those within the well-organized and well-funded animal “rights” lobby, led by the Humane Society of the U.S. (not to be confused with local humane societies) who, either for ideological or, in some cases, financial reasons, choose to ignore or reject this reality. As such, the HSUS and similar groups have launched an ongoing effort to play on the better nature of uninformed local and state government officials to impose bans on the retail sale of dogs and cats, in favor of “rescues.” But there are several problems with this.

First is the simple fact that many people want to buy puppies of a specific breed, for one of any number of reasons – they may have health issues and require hypoallergenic breeds, or they may need breeds of particular dispositions to be around children or other pets, or they may simply wish to own a golden retriever, or a Bernese mountain dog or a French bulldog. By purchasing these dogs through a licensed and regulated pet store or breeder, they not only can get the specific type of companion animal that fits their particular needs, but they will be acquiring a pet with known history. They will know where their puppy came from, know its medical history, and all other pertinent information. Most importantly, they will be purchasing a puppy that came from a domestic breeding facility that is licensed, regulated, and inspected by the USDA.

- If that option is eliminated via misguided ordinances like the one passed in Aurora, that does not eliminate the demand, or the reasons for which people choose to prefer a specific breed over another. Instead, that demand will be shifted away from the transparent world of the regulated retail pet market, and toward the largely unregulated, internet-based black market. A cruel or unscrupulous breeder will not subject him or herself to the spotlight that the regulated retail market offers.

Such ordinances also benefit the proliferation of the “retail rescue” model. While there are many respectable rescues and shelters which do tremendous work — and were indeed part of the solution to cleaning up the domestic pet trade in the past decades — there are those which misuse their nonprofit status and operate as pet stores in all but name, but without the scrutiny on sourcing. For these operations, pet store bans are simply a way to eliminate their regulated competition. Municipal shelters, responsible rescues, good regulations under PACFA, and aggressive spay-and-neuter campaigns have resulted in far fewer strays in the state of Colorado, to the point where some rescues, desperate to continue their business, have imported dogs from out of state — and even from other countries, where these animals are often bred in conditions too horrific to imagine.

THIS is the trafficking that pet store bans encourage and facilitate.

Aurora’s pet store ban may be largely symbolic, as there are no retail pet stores within the city limits. But the move, choreographed expertly by the national animal-rights lobby, sets a terrible and cruel precedent. If the real goal is to combat the heartbreaking “puppy-mill” style operation we all so rightfully despise, the best weapon we have in our arsenal is the licensed and regulated pet store. And the Aurora City Council let themselves be talked into surrendering it.

Douglas Johnson served on the Colorado Department of Agriculture PACFA Advisory Committee for 19 years. He was AKC Breeder of the Year in 2006 and 2016, and is past president of the Colorado Federation of Dog Clubs.

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**Colorado Federation of Dog Clubs and Owner, Inc.**  
**Release 1/13/20**

**What do you call someone who tries to fix a broken wheel, but instead takes a hammer and smashes the other three wheels? Answer... HB-1084!**

This bill is a train wreck brought to Colorado by none other than our friends at HSUS. This bill attacks those in the pet industry in Colorado who have been the most regulated and have stepped up to meet and frequently exceed those standards of care over the 25 year history of this program; the commercial breeders and pet stores. YES, we are saying licensed and inspected commercial breeders and pet stores in this state are doing a good job in meeting the standards set for them under the PACFA program. Those standards are the highest in the nation for such facilities, and this program has been the gold standard for licensing of anyone who breeds pet animals over certain limits, as well as those who care/groom/train/board dogs without the owner being present. Shelters and rescues are ALSO licensed under PACFA, but their record is not as stellar unfortunately. In fact it is abysmal! Yet this bill forces Colorado citizens to source their dogs only from those rescues and shelters. This bill is unacceptable and misguided.

This bill is based on the premise that rescue is the only place to get a dog. In the past rescues provided a place for dogs in our home state needing a new home and through rescues they could find one. Some still do operate on that premise, like those governed by AKC parent clubs, but sadly now they are the exception rather than the rule. People and shelters have discovered that by calling yourself a rescue, you can avoid sales and business taxes (501c3 exemption) on state and federal level, get your product for free or low cost without having to keep breeding dogs, get people to give you extra money if you provide a sad story to go with the dog, and free help who you also don't have to pay taxes to employ and they don't pay taxes either because they are 'volunteers'. Many of these rescues make millions. There is a name for this type of rescues, it is called 'retail rescue'. Last year alone over 40,000 dogs were imported into Colorado for these rescues and shelters to sell to an unsuspecting public. (Pet stores are only responsible for 4% of the dogs being sold or adopted in Colorado) Some of these dogs have brought with them nasty diseases such as rabies, TB, tick-borne diseases like ehrlichiosis, babesiosis, and other diseases, like leishmaniasis which is carried by vectors such as ticks and fleas from out of our state and even our nation. A new strain of distemper as well as a new canine flu virus also came in with rescue dogs from Korea. The cases of brucellosis, which is transmittable to humans, has tripled in Colorado this past year and is being brought into this state by rescue dogs. And the list goes on and on. Controls need to be put on dogs being imported into rescues and shelters for sale to an unsuspected public. That doesn't even address the behavioral issues and bite cases originating with dogs adopted from rescues, some resulting in deaths of other animals and/or humans. We have documented cases on several recent incidences of such attacks in Colorado. Meat dogs from China and Korea are not raised to be sociable pet animals, but they are the "hot item" in rescues currently! This bill makes rescues the primary source for dogs in our state, and destroys or severely restricts other sources of dogs as pets? Tell me again how this is a good thing?

Now, some good news! The initial draft of this bill designated that ANYONE selling a dog or cat be licensed and inspected under the PACFA program as a "Dealer". Not only would that have imploded this nationally recognized and highly respected program under the weight of those

imported into Colorado from out of state each year – 34,634 imported in 2018 alone). She reports seeing health certificates for underage rescue dogs (puppies less than 8 weeks of age, the legal age for transport) being shipped into Colorado, thousands of puppies each year, many as young as 2 weeks of age and some younger.

All groups including dog breeders and pet stores include some individuals that don't play by the rules and are viewed by their own industries as black sheep, but the CORA reports show far more animal care deficiencies and dangerous placement practices among rescues than among the categories you are being asked to restrict or eliminate.

Successful laws seek to end unacceptable conduct through regulation; they don't target legally operating businesses for elimination based on ideology, out-of-date stereotypes, or monopolistic goals. Sadly, this bill does exactly that.

If the goal of HB 20-1084 is to raise animal care standards, its exemption of rescues and shelters from the seller requirements misses the mark and demonstrates that its backers, however sincere they might be, are out of touch with the major animal welfare trends and realities of the day.

According to CORA reports as well as articles in mainstream media, rescues and shelters are now the leading marketplace source of animal welfare problems and sick and dangerous dogs. The inspection reports show widespread inadequacies; a lack of appropriate veterinary care; lack of a clean and adequate supply of food and water; lack of socialization, cramped and unsanitary living conditions; exposure to extreme temperatures and examples of dogs being offered to the public with known histories of aggression and ongoing illnesses, a practice that is cited in the PACFA inspection reports and that places Coloradans' health and safety at risk.

By contrast, most pet stores in the state comply with the current regulations, employ local workers, pay taxes, and add to the economy of their local communities.

Today's pet stores must only source their dogs from USDA licensed and inspected breeders unless they buy from small breeders who are exempt from USDA regulation because they have 4 or fewer breeding females. Furthermore:

- Stores must vaccinate and have all their pets checked by a veterinarian before sale;
- They must disclose the source of their dogs before a sale is finalized; and
- They must offer a reasonable replacement or compensate the purchaser if a dog has a pre-existing condition.

Forbidding these regulated Colorado pet stores from selling dogs and cats will assure that the only retail outlet where Coloradans can acquire a family dog is from a minimally regulated **retail rescue** or **retail shelter**, a nonprofit corporation that imports dogs to meet demand and places them via fee-based adoptions, but without adhering to most of the regulations that the commercial marketplace has to meet. In other words, passing HB 20-184 will degrade the pet marketplace in Colorado.

Some lawmakers may not be aware that dog overpopulation as it existed throughout much of the last century no longer exists in most of the United States. Numerous studies show that it takes between 8 and 9 million dogs just to replace the ones that die each year. All valid and reliable data available show that United States dog breeders of all types do not produce enough dogs currently to meet the demand pet dogs. As a result, national and international dog relocation and importation programs have developed. The CDC estimates that over one million dogs were imported into the US last year (See page 727). Restricting the legitimate regulated sales channels for dogs by

commercial breeders will only exacerbate the shortage of pets for the public market, encouraging the importation of pets with an inadequate health and temperament history.

Proponents of pet store bans claim that breed enthusiasts – private in-home breeders who typically work with one or two breeds, belong to kennel clubs, promote responsible dog ownership and put on dog shows that bring millions in tourism dollars to their states each year – will rise up to meet demand for the types of dogs the rescue community does not have: namely, puppies and specific breeds. That is not true. It is pure fantasy. Breed enthusiasts who belong to Colorado's kennel clubs cannot possibly meet consumer demand without becoming commercial breeders themselves.

Many local supporters of bills like HB 20-1084 are compassionate, well-meaning people who support the idea of closing pet stores because they remember an earlier period when the entire commercial pet industry had big problems. They view pet stores as they were, not as they are, something the special interests behind this bill have used to their advantage. This bill can only be justified by out-of-date perceptions and stereotypes about the pet industry.

The truth is, the special interests supporting HB 20-1084 know that this bill would result in putting small independent pet stores out of business, leaving rescue and shelter dogs as the only public/retail source of dogs available in the community. They know that the retail environment cannot deal effectively with large adult dogs and the contagious diseases and parasites found in many rescued pets.

In other words, the goal of some HB 20-1084 supporters is and always has been to monopolize the public/retail pet marketplace sector with fee-based, tax-exempt adoption/sales. Rescues and shelter dogs offering such adoptions already dominate the pet marketplace, but after years of regulating and restricting everyone else, this bill will give them the monopoly they seek.

**Colorado rescues and shelters need greater regulation.** Tragically, some Colorado rescues and shelters are operating in indefensible ways that threaten not only the health and welfare of our pets but also place public health and safety at risk. Whether it's ideology, irrational sentimentality, or just plain old-fashioned greed, it is their irresponsible practices that scream out for regulation, not the targets of this legislation.

The passage of this bill would set back animal welfare advances 50 years to a period that predates the 1972 federal Animal Welfare Act and reverses improvements made over the past several decades. Passing this bill will create a monopoly for unregulated and untaxed rescues and shelters – assuring that most Coloradans will only be able to find a family dog through poorly regulated and operated groups. It will also create a black market for consumers seeking puppies and specific breeds.

Ultimately, this bill will hurt animals, harm Colorado's pet owners and everyone else who cares about animal health and welfare of pets and the preservation of breeds.

We have additional issues in several areas of the bill where we believe that the language is either unclear in its meaning or contradictory in its terms.

Please contact me if I can offer any additional information. Sincerely,



Patti Strand, NAIA president

## **FORT COLLINS PET STORE ORDINANCE MESSAGING DOC - INTERNAL ONLY**

- **Banning retail pet stores will not address the proponents intended goals**
- **Banning retail pet stores only benefits inhumane breeders**
  - Pet stores are licensed and heavily regulated by both the state and US Dept. of AG
  - Pet stores meet a demand for specific breeds of known histories, particular qualities, etc.
  - Where pet stores are banned, that demand still exists – it just goes underground
  - The alternative to regulated pet stores is unregulated internet sales, unscrupulous sellers masquerading as “rescues”, and other black-market alternatives
  - “Puppy mills”, or inhumane breeders that do not follow the law or wish to escape detection, do not work with regulated pet stores.
  - Pet stores do not do business with unregulated, inhumane breeders.
  - Local pet stores use only regulated, inspected, and reputable breeders and sources who are compliant with all USDA, state, and local laws from across the nation.
  - Every part of the legitimate retail pet business is regulated by either the state, the US Dept. of AG, or both – breeders, brokers, stores.
- **Regulated pet stores serve a specific demand**
  - Many people, for many reasons, prefer specific breeds
  - Some need particular breeds for health reasons, i.e. hypoallergenic
  - Many people want or need companion animals with a known history.
  - If this demand is not met by a well regulated and inspected market, it will be met by unregulated, uninspected breeders or importers.
- **Opponents of regulated pet stores are addressing problems that have already been solved**
  - Puppy mills, of the type that existed several decades ago, have almost entirely been dismantled, thanks to the efforts of animal welfare organizations, veterinarians, responsible breeders, and the pet industry working with government at all levels to create a well-regulated marketplace and strong enforcement.
  - The “bad actors”, irresponsible or cruel breeders, over breeding, operate outside the regulated market. Banning regulated pet stores and breeders helps keep the irresponsible, unregulated breeders in business.
  - Pet store opponents should bring themselves up to date with the realities of the pet industry, and address current problems, that are caused by unregulated elements.
- **Retail pet store bans also help the unregulated “retail rescue” model proliferate**
  - Successful efforts at public education and spay/neuter programs have greatly reduced the number of stray dogs.
  - As a result, some unscrupulous rescues have been desperate to find animals to keep their fee-based adoption model going

- These “retail rescue” outfits commonly import puppies from out of the state or country, where breeding conditions are indescribably poor.
- Bans of regulated retail pet stores encourage this hideous model, and fuel puppy importation.
- These “retail rescues” give a black eye to the many responsible, humane rescues that are trying to do the right thing.
- Retail pet stores are responsible businesses
  - These stores pay property and other taxes, provide employment, and meet legitimate consumer demands.
  - These owners care deeply for their animals, their customers and their communities.
  - Pet stores provide the highest level of veterinary care
  - Pet stores spend a great deal of time and effort ensuring their puppies are going to the right homes, including follow up.
  - Pet store owners have dedicated their lives to the welfare of the animals in their care. Animal welfare is their livelihood.
- Unlike other pet procurement options, pet stores are already very well-regulated by both the state and federal government.
  - Local pet stores are well regulated in Colorado under both the US Dept. of Agriculture Animal Welfare Act (AWA), and the Colorado Department of Agriculture Pet Animal Care Facilities Act (PACFA).
  - The AWA and PACFA set the standards for the humane care and treatment of pet animals in these facilities. The PACFA is a model program for states across the country and is dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of those animals in pet care facilities.
  - Retail pet stores comply with the robust regulations for sourcing and care. The public can view all of a pet store’s inspection records or facility licensing through open records requests and online portals where they are available.
  - HB 21-1102 strengthened these requirements even further, and local pet stores have fully met or exceeded all the requirements laid out in that bill.
  - Pet stores provide more veterinary care and oversight to a puppy during its first 12 weeks of age than most other facilities (such as rescues and shelters) and therefore have fewer health issues.

**The benefits of licensed, inspected local pet stores:**

- VARIETY OF OPTIONS – those interested in a puppy or kitten can view the temperament, ask questions from knowledgeable staff, and interact with a wide selection of breeds at a pet store before committing.
- PET STORES PROVIDE DISABLED OR ALLERGIC CONSUMERS WITH A CHOICE – pet stores provide a niche for adults and children needing to start with a puppy for lineage needs like hypoallergenic, for training to be a service dog, or to be able to reside with a family of a disabled child.

- **RESPONSIBLY MEET MARKET DEMANDS** – retail pet stores can more easily provide a specific selection of healthy and happy puppies and kittens of any breed to consumers.
- **PROVIDE REWARDING, MULTI-FACETED RETAIL JOBS** – the approximately 125 employees of small business pet stores in Colorado enjoy the opportunities to apply an enormous level of care and love for their animals.
- **CONSUMER PEACE OF MIND** – with well-regulated and inspected facilities, consumers can have peace of mind knowing their new family member has been well cared for.
- **PROVIDE A COLORADO CHOICE FOR COLORADO CONSUMERS** – customers can shop locally knowing their support of a Colorado pet store goes right back into their community.