



FAQS:

# Retail Pet Sale Bans

## ● WHAT ARE RETAIL PET SALE BANS?

Pet sale bans are laws that prohibit pet stores from selling dogs, cats and sometimes other species such as rabbits obtained from breeders and distributors. Some versions allow pet stores to obtain animals from rescues for sale, while others bar any sales at all. They are a well-intended but misguided attempt to stop bad breeders who do not prioritize animal health and wellbeing. Bans do nothing to put bad breeders out of business, but they do harm highly-regulated pet stores (often small, locally-owned businesses), who offer their customers the choice of a pet that best fits their needs and, in many cases, provide the legal protection of a purchase warranty.

## ● WILL A RETAIL PET SALE BAN HELP PUT BAD BREEDERS OUT OF BUSINESS?

No, a retail pet sale ban will not stop bad breeders who are unregulated, unlicensed, and are not held accountable to any animal care standards. A ban will only punish law-abiding small business pet stores and the responsible breeders they work with who are highly regulated and required to be licensed and inspected. Only licensed or exempt breeders are allowed to provide dogs to pet stores, who supply just four percent of the dogs that come into American homes each year. The way to put bad breeders out of business is to evaluate, improve, and increase enforcement of federal and state animal care laws, as well as strengthening animal care standards and applying them to pet sources including stores, licensed breeders, shelters and rescues.

## ● WHAT WILL A RETAIL PET SALE BAN MEAN FOR PET STORES?

A ban will harm highly-regulated pet stores. Independent and locally-owned pet stores can't compete with the prices on pet care products offered by high-volume brick-and-mortar chains and online sellers. Instead, they rely on serving as a local, knowledgeable resource and developing personal relationships with pet owners in their communities – relationships that often begin with getting a pet. These stores can't easily convert their business model or floor space from being focused on providing pets to selling only pet care products. The cost of a major renovation and the revenue lost while the work is done could run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars, and the new business model would have no guarantee of success. A pet sale ban will put independent and locally-owned pet stores out of business, period.

## ● WHAT WILL A RETAIL PET SALE BAN MEAN FOR PROSPECTIVE PET OWNERS?

Pet stores provide the important opportunity for families to personally interact with and choose a pet that will be the best fit for their circumstances from a regulated source that in many cases offers legal protections such as purchase warranties. If a future pet owner needs or wants a specific breed due to common circumstances like allergies, the presence of small children or space concerns, their options will be severely limited and they can be driven to unregulated, unlicensed and potentially unscrupulous pet-sellers where they could fall victim to fraud. According to the Better Business Bureau, fake online

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puppy sellers and puppy scams have surged 39 percent since 2017,<sup>1</sup> and up to 80 percent of sponsored online ads for puppies may be fake.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, victims of these puppy scams have no legal recourse because they purchased from a source without regulatory oversight and no warranty offered.

### ● **WHAT WILL A RETAIL PET SALE BAN MEAN FOR DOGS AND CATS?**

Retail pet sale bans will result in the growth of the unregulated market for puppy sales that has zero oversight and no system in place to protect animal welfare or the families who bring the pets into their homes. Dogs and cats offered through pet stores are protected by federal and state laws that require licensing, regular inspections, specific standards of care and detailed record-keeping on their health, veterinary care and source.

### ● **WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT PET STORES?**

Retail pet stores and the licensed breeders they work with are a highly-regulated, best-in-class source of pets that provide veterinary exams and keep detailed records of the condition and care of their animals—legal protections that are not required of other pet sources such as shelters or rescues. Pet stores are the only place that families can turn to for the peace-of-mind of knowing that they are bringing home a dog or cat that was raised under federal and state care standards, has a detailed medical history, and in many cases, are protected by a consumer warranty. They are a valuable and transparent option for prospective pet owners.

### ● **HOW SHOULD STATES WORK TO STOP BAD BREEDERS?**

Before passing new regulations or bans, states should spend energy and resources on updating and enforcing existing regulations and going after bad breeders, to ensure that all breeders are held to the same standards of care. In addition, animal care standards in the state should be strengthened and applied to pet providers including stores, licensed breeders, shelters and rescues.



<sup>1</sup> BBB Alert: Beware of Puppy Scams This Holiday Season - Findings by BBB Reveal a Surge in Complaints and Scam Reports. (n.d.). <https://www.bbb.org/article/scams/18964-scam-alert-beware-of-puppy-scams-this-holiday-season>

<sup>2</sup> Puppy Scams: How to Protect Yourself from Fake Online Pet Sellers. (2017, November). <https://www.bbb.org/article/scams/14213-puppy-scams-how-to-protect-yourself-from-fake-online-pet-sellers#:~:text=Experts>