

H.B. 5916 & 5917

AN ATTACK ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND ANIMAL WELFARE

What will these bills do?

- H.B. 5917 attempts to preempt localities from regulating pet stores, but the language that narrowly passed in the House is vague and confusing. Outright preemption was so controversial that it was watered down to state that localities cannot “arbitrarily” ban pet shops that meet certain unenforceable criteria.
- H.B. 5916 includes weak and unenforceable provisions that might appear to regulate where pet stores can source puppies, but in reality would have almost no impact on even the most problematic pet stores.

Who will these bills protect?

- Petland: This Ohio-based corporation is the primary backer of these bills. Petland is going state-to-state, asking legislators to protect its flawed and outdated business model that relies on the sale of puppies from large-scale, inhumane commercial breeders.
 - Petland Novi was recently sued for selling a puppy with an antibiotic-resistant strain of *Campylobacter* infection to a consumer who then contracted the infection himself and had to be hospitalized.
 - Petland stores in Michigan and throughout the country are riddled with lawsuits, scandals, and unhappy consumers saddled with sick puppies and high veterinary bills.
- Puppy-selling pet stores: The very small percentage of pet stores in Michigan that sell commercially-raised puppies would likely see these bills as a green light to continue sourcing from inhumane breeders, selling sick puppies, and deceiving consumers.
- Puppy mills: These bills protect puppy mills—inhumane commercial breeders—by securing their pet store sales outlets. H.B. 5916 allows stores to source from USDA-licensed puppy mills as well as those that are completely unregulated.
 - USDA standards of care allow for significant cruelty, including allowing mother dogs to spend their entire lives in cramped, wire cage only 6 inches larger than herself.
 - USDA does a horrible job of enforcing these shockingly low standards, and admits that it hasn’t revoked a license in over a year, even where multiple and egregious welfare violation have been found.¹
 - Readable USDA inspection reports are no longer available to the public or enforcement agents, as all relevant information is redacted from reports on its website and available through FOIA requests.

Why are these bills so dangerous?

- While it is questionable whether these bills actually take away the right of local governments to regulate pet stores, they would likely have a chilling effect because their authority in this area would be so blurred.
- Puppy-selling pet stores pose a number of problems for communities that local officials must retain the power to address including:
 - Lying about where their puppies come from, thus duping consumers into support cruel puppy mills,
 - Selling sick puppies to consumers, often leading to thousands of dollars in veterinary bills,
 - Selling *Campylobacter*-infected puppies to consumers, leading over 118 people across 18 states, to contract this antibiotic-resistant infection, according to the Centers for Disease Control²,
 - Utilizing lending schemes for overpriced puppies that many would consider predatory.
- Local governments have the burden of managing pet overpopulation, and local tax dollars are spent sheltering, and euthanizing, dogs. Pet store regulation may be a key aspect of this management.

THE HSUS URGES YOU TO VOTE “NO” ON THESE HIGHLY PROBLEMATIC BILLS.

¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2018/10/18/usdas-enforcement-animal-welfare-laws-plummeted-agency-figures-show/?utm_term=.6eded0ed66fb

² https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6737a3.htm?s_cid=mm6737a3_w