

From: [Heather Lindner](#)
To: [BOR AllReps](#)
Subject: Re: Ban the Sale of Dogs, Cats, and Rabbits in Pet Stores
Date: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 7:20:16 PM
Attachments: [HumaneWorld_Horrible-Hundred-2025.pdf](#)

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to urge you to support Ordinance LR31.072, which would ban the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits in pet stores in Stamford.

As someone who has worked first hand with dogs that have been rescued from puppy mills, I can tell you about the abusive reality of the puppy mills to pet stores pipeline. Any dog that is being sold in a pet store is not a dog that is coming from a responsible breeder. Notice I said "responsible" not licensed. Just because a breeder has a license does not mean that they are ethical and responsible with their dogs. There is a huge difference. A responsible breeder will have a limited number of puppies, will meet and interview potential pet parents, will have paperwork, and their dogs will be healthy and medically cared for. A potential pet parent will be able to meet the mother dog and know all of the background information of each canine parent. The breeder will also keep in touch and be available if any issues come up. This type of breeder is one who breeds because they love dogs. They will NEVER sell their puppies online or to pet stores. Ever.

Puppy mill breeders are an entirely different situation. Puppy mills breeders often have hundreds of dogs in one location and forcibly impregnate their female dogs as many times as possible to get as many puppies as they can. It's all about profit. These mother dogs are often kept in filthy conditions and are not shown any kindness, as they are seen as livestock and a way to make a quick buck. Earlier this year, at Lucky Dog Refuge, multiple golden retriever females were rescued from an Amish puppy mill in Pennsylvania. Anyone who has ever met a golden retriever knows how outgoing these dogs naturally are. Not these poor girls from the puppy mill. They were withdrawn, sick, filthy, and terrified of every person that came near them. They had been bred over and over again, never shown an ounce of love, and had never been given medical attention. They were kept in barns and never cleaned. One of them, Cammie, was so traumatized that she turned around in her crate at the shelter and faced the wall, curled up in a ball, terrified of everyone. She did this for weeks as the staff and volunteers gently coaxed her out and did their best to make her feel safe. Cammie is one of the lucky ones. She was rescued and rehabilitated and was adopted into a loving home where she never has to be afraid or forced to have another litter of puppies ever again. There are SO many more Cammie's out there who don't get out and get a happy ending. Too many. They are who I am advocating for.

Unfortunately, the USDA, who is in charge of inspecting every breeder and pet store, is not able to catch every single animal abuser due to a lack of resources. Because of the weak or nonexistent laws that should protect animals, unethical breeders keep their licenses.

What we really need is a nationwide law that makes it illegal to operate a puppy mill. Until that happens, we need to start at the state and city levels. Did you know that a puppy store right here in Stamford called Smart Puppies, gets their puppies from puppy mills? I know because one of their puppies ended up at a Lucky Dog Refuge and we were able to get the original breeders paperwork. We tracked the name and discovered that this person, Brian Licherie, is in business with one of the worst puppy mills in the United States run by Steve

Kruse, who has multiple violations from the USDA, including throwing a bag of dead puppies at a USDA inspector. They are both on the Humane Society's "Horrible Hundred" list for this year. This is Kruse's eighth time on the list. I have attached the list for you to read, as well as other articles about Steve Kruse and Brian Licherie. And yet, they are still being allowed to operate and sell to pet stores.

We might not be able to shut down these animal abusers but we can stop their puppy mill pipeline coming into Stamford. Connecticut is a forward thinking state in many ways but we are behind on this issue. Let's take a stand against puppy mills and follow our New York neighbors to be on the right side of history. Please be the voice for the voiceless. There is absolutely no need for puppy mills or the sale of animals in pet stores. There are thousands and thousands of adoptable animals in shelters that are overflowing in our country and there are ethical breeders for those who want a specific breed of dog. Pet stores can successfully sell pet supplies, have grooming services, training services, and even daycares. They can hook up with local shelters to hold adoptions at their stores, like Petsmart does. It is 100% possible to make sure pet stores stay in business and also that animals are not abused and this ordinance is a way to start a new path forward.

Please vote with not only the facts but with your hearts. These animals desperately need you. People see the adorable puppies in the pet store window but I'm asking you to see the moms left behind. They are the ones who need you. They need all of us.

Thank you for your time. Please don't let these innocent mamas down.

Sincerely,
Heather Lindner
North Stamford Resident
415-312-2009

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Steve Kruse/Stonehenge Kennel, West Point, Iowa: USDA inspectors found food bowls smeared with feces or buildup of "brown organic material" at massive puppy mill where 199 dogs were previously euthanized.

Even after it appeared in seven prior Horrible Hundred reports for issues with sick and injured dogs, and was previously suspended at least twice, in August 2024 USDA inspectors again found Stonehenge Kennel to be in violation, proving the kennel's apparent inability to remain in compliance with USDA's basic standards. The inspectors noted that four food bowls were smeared with "dried feces or a thick buildup of dark brown organic material" inside the bowls. The kennel has a history of recurring violations since at least 2015. Over the years, more than 140 sick or ailing dogs have been found at the kennel, including limping, injured and bleeding dogs. Kruse received a 21-day suspension from the USDA in March 2023, but records show the USDA continued to find more ailing dogs even during the suspension period. In addition to the USDA violations, state inspectors also found violations in 2023 for issues such as a strong odor and unsanitary conditions. As noted in a prior report, at least 199 dogs were euthanized at the facility in 2021, after Kruse exchanged dogs with a notorious puppy mill operator, Daniel Gingerich, whose license was revoked that same year. Kruse had also had a previous suspension for throwing a bag containing two dead puppies at a USDA inspector. USDA #42-B-0162, IA #4576. **REPEAT OFFENDER; EIGHTH TIME IN THIS REPORT.**



Above: Ailing dogs at Stonehenge Kennel in Iowa. Photos by USDA, 2023.

Brian Lichirie, West Point, Iowa: B dealer linked to Steve Kruse in lawsuit had "focused inspection" to check on four dogs for unknown reasons; massive dealer has over 300 dogs and sold to Petland. Brian Lichirie is a USDA Class B dealer, which means he is licensed to re-sell dogs bred by himself or by others to pet stores and other outlets. Lichirie is believed to be closely linked to repeat offender Steve Kruse/Stonehenge Kennel and his other associate, Wuanita Swedlund. These associations were alluded to in a lawsuit filed by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 2024 that accuses the USDA of allowing dealers such as Kruse, who has had a notorious history of violations and at least two license suspensions, to "launder" dogs through other dealers, such as Lichirie, whose address has been linked to Steve Kruse. As of February 2025, the USDA was seeking dismissal of the lawsuit on the basis of standing. Although Lichirie's USDA records online list no specific violations, a "focused" USDA inspection report dated May 30, 2024, indicates that the USDA performed a special inspection to re-check four dogs for unknown reasons. This indicates that USDA may have

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investigated a concern and redacted the record of the potential violation, possibly due to the ongoing lawsuit. USDA's public posting of only Lichirie's compliant inspection reports and not the report that presumably required the focused recheck appears misleading. A February 2025 USDA inspection report on Lichirie shows he had over 300 animals; there were no violations noted on that report. Lichirie sold to at least one Petland store. USDA #42-B-0317, IA #9080.

<https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2025/10/09/iowa-puppy-mill-gets-new-license-clearing-its-record-of-past-violations/>

<https://bailingoutbenji.com/steve-kruse-saga/>

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/money/agriculture/2025/05/14/iowans-included-on-annual-horrible-hundred-dog-breeders-list/83608088007/#>