

Dear Representative,

I own and operate a family business in Newberg and Wilsonville. It's a pet store I started with my wife, father, and brother 15 years ago upon graduating college. For the last 15 years we have been through every possible challenge you can think of when starting and building a business, and yes, as you would expect, a lot of sweat and a lot of tears. We are now at a point where we have a legitimate career for ourselves and our families--and not only ourselves but the 30 employees who now subsist on our business. The HB 2804 bill being proposed would end overnight what we've built. The bill would eliminate the legitimate selling of our ethically and locally sourced puppies that our customers love and support us for.

Puppies weren't always the cornerstone of our business, but in the face of so many other pressures facing a retail business it's become foundational. With the sharp rise in labor costs, and the price suppression on durable dry goods due to online retailing, growing the business has taken many failures and risks, but ultimately we found the niche that people needed. Animals have become the main reason for us to exist as a local pet store and the only way we can compete in the current marketplace.

We have become a core business in the community--where people congregate to interact with animals, reduce stress and meet friends. Everywhere we go we see people's faces light up when they find out we own Critter Cabana. When we had a fire at our business 5 years ago, the community was so devastated that they came to our rescue (without us ever asking for support) to the extent that local kids and families raised over \$10,000 from the community to help us rebuild and bring back the store they knew and loved. There is not a child in our communities who doesn't know who we are or love coming to our stores. Those children are now adults who work for us and are loyal patrons 15 years later. We have not built this loyalty, love, and reputation through shady dealings with unscrupulous puppy dealers as the propaganda from extreme activists might have led you to suspect.

Yes, there are activists who have been trying to harm us for years through fake reviews, online slander, and would love to see pet ownership ended and see this bill and others like it as a rung in that ladder. But we, and any business who wishes to thrive in today's environment, are already held accountable to incredibly high standards by our customers--not that we needed that motivation. Anyone starting a pet store is an animal lover, as we are.

We started our business on the core foundation of educating our customers on the animals that we sold. Our mission statement is, and always has been "Enriching the lives of people and animals for the benefit of both". We live up to this and spend a long time with every customer preparing them for ownership and provide a thick packet of materials to help them get on their way. Over 80% of our customers leave with a lifetime dog training membership because they care for the well-being and future of their puppy. They also know that as a brick-and-mortar store we will always be available when they have additional questions or need advice about their new pet.

The retail environment provides a great place for people to interact with different breeds and we provide a great service to breeders in rural Oregon and Washington. These breeders care for their animals just as well (or better) than breeders in the city but don't have nearly the same ability to adopt out their dogs due to their distance from the population. We visit these breeders personally, driving as far east as Pendleton and as far south as Brookings to ensure that the breeders are behaving within modern ethical standards for the treatment of their dogs. 99% of the hundreds of breeders we have seen and met with over the years are already meeting this standard and their relationship with us always results in even further refinement of the health programs for their dogs. So not only is this bill harmful to us as a business, but also harmful to the very animals it is trying to protect.

I strongly encourage you to come visit our stores and see the people who will inevitably be interacting with our puppies. We have thousands of customers who are enjoying companion animals they have acquired through us. All this is at risk from a bill that does nothing but progress a purely

activist agenda. Our business would not be able to continue, the lives of us and our 30 employees would be thrown into chaos, and our communities would be devastated. This is a bill that harms small business, harms communities, harms real families, and harms animals. I urge you as a committee member to ensure that HB 2804 does not pass.

Sincerely,

**Matt Johnson**  
Crittter Cabana