

Dear Chair Holvey, Vice-Chair Elmer, Vice-Chair Sosa and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 2915, which would ban the sale of puppies and kittens in pet stores. As many are aware, selling puppies and kittens in pet stores raises serious animal welfare and consumer protection issues. Most of these store-sold pets come from large-scale, commercial breeders who are driven by profit at the expense of the safety and well-being of the animals in their care. It is unacceptable that Oregon is the only market on the West Coast that still allows this harmful pipeline to continue to exist. Oregon is a state of pioneers and trailblazers, leading the nation in promoting progressive policy that promises greater freedoms and opportunity for all of its inhabitants. We need to carry our compassion and progressive philosophies in our approach to the treatment of animal inhabitants, who experience pain, hunger, loneliness, fear and anxiety, just like humans do. Therefore, they deserve to live lives free of exploitative harm. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, “the greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated”.

As a cat owner, this bill is near and dear to my heart. I rescued my Siamese cat, Duchess, when she was only a few weeks old from a household that was unable to care for her. Duchess was the “runt of the litter,” being the only Calico cat among her siblings. I was lucky enough to find Duchess and provide her with a safe home at an early stage in her life. I cannot imagine how different her life would’ve been if she had found herself in the hands of a neglectful and abusive breeder. She would not be the curious, cuddly and content cat that she is today. Unfortunately, this is not always the case for many dogs and cats across our state. Far too many kittens and puppies are born into cruel and unsanitary conditions, taken from their mothers at just 7-8 weeks old, transported in close proximity to other stressed and sick animals, and then placed in pet store cages to be handled by inexperienced staff and customers.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns, and please consider my full support for this essential bill. I ask you to vote yes on HB 2915 in order to support a market that rewards the important work of shelters, rescues and responsible breeders instead of uplifting a massive pet industry that profits from the exploitation of animals and consumers. I hope you will vote on behalf of Oregonians and our vulnerable animal population.

Sincerely,

Gabby Mijalski-Fahim