

Submitter: Cassidy Kotter

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB2915

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

I am writing in strong support of HB 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 alike. The great majority of these retail pet stores derive their products, in this case, living, breathing dogs and cats, from large-scale, commercial breeders who are frequently referred to as "mills". These puppy mills are characterized by deplorable, inhumane conditions that keep animals cramped, filthy, and without proper veterinary care or socialization. From an animal rights standpoint, the allowance of this type of treatment is unconscionable. However, the animals who come from these sties are not the only ones who end up suffering. The folks that step up to care for these dogs and cats are forced to cough up the funds for reactive care to treat the laundry list of conditions these nefariously bred animals are frequently afflicted by. The lifespans of these animals are typically significantly decreased due to genetic disadvantage too, meaning folks are forced to spend thousands on veterinary medicine to treat health conditions before ultimately losing the animal to its inherent physiological issues anyway. These dogs and cats' already short lives are rife with necessary medical visits and their owners are forced to bear that financial burden before inevitably facing the grief of losing that pet too soon.

This legislation is extremely important to me as someone whose first family pet was from a puppy mill and who had to experience the subsequent turmoil when we lost her too soon to problems that derived directly from serial inbreeding over the course of breeding 9 litters from the same dog. Lucy Eleanor Cottrill was the light of my life, ringing in at 4 whole pounds and with the sass that seems to always accompany Miniature Pomeranians. Unfortunately, she was from a puppy mill. She was the runt of her mother's ninth litter and was severely inbred. Because of her genetic makeup, Lucy faced many challenges. Her eyesight was very poor, she had difficulty breathing and tired quickly, had trouble potty-training, exhibited high levels of anxiety, and struggled to socialize. She was a loose cannon-- one minute she'd be letting you pet her and the next she'd turn around and try to bite you. It was so hard to see her always getting sick as well. She would spend days under the bed for seemingly no reason. At just 5 years old, she would go on to pass away due to brain lesions that were only discovered days before she died. Circumstantially, she might've gotten a bad rap, but she was truly the most loving and quirky girl. I remember the pain I felt knowing that if only she'd been given a better shot at life by her breeders, her quality

of life and its duration both would've been so much greater. Lucy used to do this adorable thing where she'd rub herself all through your hair if you laid on the floor with her. We called them "puppy hugs" at my family's house. I'd give anything for just one more puppy hug.

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 remedy a massive pet industry that profits from the exploitation of animals and consumers alike. I hope you will vote on behalf of Oregonians and our vulnerable animal population.