

Chairman Smith, Vice-Chairman Ryan, Minority Ranking Member Driehaus and members of the House Finance Committee, I am Susan Urell and I am a dental hygienist, a dog lover, and a Columbus resident.

I've also been a Petland customer for as long as I can remember, saving my allowance money to buy fish, and then turtles, and hamsters, and bunny rabbits, along with all the supplies that go along with pet ownership. Every week for many years of my childhood my Dad and I would go to Petland to buy goldfish for his pet piranha (under much protesting from me!), which he fed every Wednesday. In the 1970's when I was 14 years old, my parents took me on a surprise trip to Petland and bought me my first puppy.

For the past two years, I began taking my developmentally disabled friend to Petland in Pickerington to shop for pet toys and food. While we are there we always take time to play with the puppies, and more often than not I end up buying not just my own supplies, but also

toys for the puppies! I can definitely say that I have been a loyal customer my whole life.

More than once my friend and I have been told that the puppies we wanted to play with were sick and couldn't come out of their cages to play. The first time that happened I didn't think much about it, but the second and third time we were told the puppies were sick, it sent up a red flag to me. Then one day we met a customer who was getting a replacement puppy because the one she had just bought got sick and died shortly after going to her home.

That was it for me. I began to actively wonder, *what was going on at Petland with the puppies?* I began asking around and discovered that there is such a thing as "puppy mills."

Last week I sat in on the testimonies brought forth by animal advocates and I learned more about these so-called "puppy mills." I had tears in my eyes as I heard about the stacked cages with feces and urine dripping down on the mothers and babies below. I heard the testimony about the report that was given to you

all on the deficiencies of USDA inspections, and was both shocked and disgusted to see the photographs of the suffering animals from a puppy mill *that is REGULATED by the USDA.*

I can't even imagine the conditions of the animals in puppy mills that are NOT regulated by the USDA. I've enclosed some photos of dogs rescued from puppy mills in Ohio (*Please refer to enclosed photos A, B, C, D, E.*)

Last week while sitting here, I learned that, with all due respect, SB 331 is being rushed through and that many animal advocate groups are upset that they were neither invited nor notified to attend interested party meetings. Again, and with the utmost in respect, how do you only invite the American Kennel Club, The Farm Bureau, The Sportsman Alliance.... and NOT invite the Humane Society of the United States or the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to these hearings?

You're making laws that will impact the lives of animals, yet the **TOP TWO** animal protection groups in not just Ohio, but in the *United States*

of America, are feeling left out of the discussion and ignored, and last week came here to urge you to slow down and work with them on this God-awful puppy mill issue. With all due respect I have to ask you, what's the big rush to pass this bill **without** the input of the animal cruelty EXPERTS? Respectfully, I think I have to call shenanigans.

I don't know about you, but growing up, I came to know many dogs as friends. Did any of you distinguished Representatives have dogs as friends? Then you know that dogs are SPECIAL. They're **companion** animals, not livestock.

In the United States of America, we don't eat dogs. We don't raise dogs for consumption, so they should not be raised in a puppy mill factory farm, stacked 3 cages high without a catch pan, where feces and urine drips down onto the dogs below. Why are we allowing these conditions for our beloved COMPANIONS? Man's best friend. Our family members!

As part of the community that provides good

health to others, the dental hygienist in me trusts and believes in science. I read scientific articles regularly and I am always intrigued by new discoveries. Recent studies are showing that dogs do have feelings and they absolutely suffer emotionally from their experience in puppy mills.

I won't bore you with all the details but I have included for your review several articles on a study that scientifically PROVES the emotional capacity of dogs thanks to Gregory S. Berns, a Neuroscientist and Professor in the Psychology Department at Emory University (Please refer to Docs 1 & 2).

Anyone who has a dog at home can testify to their deep emotional expression...happy to see you when you come home, sad to see you go, jealous when you pay attention to other dogs, and protective of you when they sense danger. It really doesn't take a scientific study for dog-lovers to know that dogs have feelings, but now the proof is out there. **Dogs have feelings!**

I am also including a study done in collaboration

with the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine called “Mental Health of Dogs Formerly Used as “Breeding Stock” in Commercial Breeding Establishments (Journal of Applied Animal Behavior Science Vol 135:96-94, 2011).” Please see for yourselves the psychological impact of puppy mills on the puppies as they grow and develop (Please refer to Docs 6 and 7).

I’ll quote and paraphrase: “When compared with a control group of pet dogs, former puppy mill breeding dogs were reported as showing significantly higher rates of health problems (23.5% versus 16.6%)... fear (both social and nonsocial)...house-soiling...and significantly lower rates of... trainability... and energy.” End quote.

So now we know that dogs experience emotions, and we know that puppy mill puppies are negatively impacted in regards to health, behavior, fear, and trainability. Now that it’s out there, **THE SCIENCE CANNOT BE IGNORED. Dogs are emotional beings who suffer in**

puppy mills.

With that in mind, I respectfully urge each and every one of you, to tap into the compassionate caring side of your humanity, the part of you who values the feelings and lives of other living, feeling beings, remember that dogs provide us with friendship and pure love. They deserve our protection, so vote NO on SB 331. I respectfully urge you to work with the Humane Society of the United States and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and all of the other animal advocate groups here in Ohio who are pretty much *begging* to help you, and please write a bill that will both protect animals AND keep the pet stores in business.

In conclusion, I have made a decision after my 50-or-so year relationship with Petland, to stop patronizing their stores so long as they support puppy mills, and I will tell others the to do the same. I WILL NOT, I CANNOT, continue to put money in their pockets that will pay for the blatant animal cruelty experienced by sensitive, emotional canines who bless so many Ohio

families. It disgusts me to my core that, as a lifelong customer of Petland, *I, an animal lover since childhood, have been helping pay for animal cruelty.* I just can't believe it. I'm sick over it, and that is why I'm here today, imploring you to vote NO on SB 331. Thank you for your time and consideration.