

**From:** [Judith Werr](#)  
**To:** [Gerard, Pat](#); [Eggers, Dave](#); [Justice, Charlie](#); [Robinson-Flowers, Rene](#); [Long, Janet C](#); [Seel, Karen](#); [Peters, Kathleen](#)  
**Cc:** [Renee Rivard](#)  
**Subject:** Ban on the retail sales of puppies  
**Date:** Monday, December 6, 2021 11:10:13 PM

---

**CAUTION:** *This message has originated from outside of the organization. **Do not** click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the correspondence from the sender and know the content is safe.*

I strongly urge you to pass a full ban on the retail sale of puppies in Pinellas County. All existing stores must be included in the ban. I understand that you do not want to discourage business in your cities, however, pet stores that sell animals are predatory businesses no better than pain clinics that are fronts for pill mills or massage parlors that are fronts for human trafficking. Yes, the pet store may look like a wonderful place, but it is a front for the horrors of the puppy mills. We can agree that there are businesses that are detrimental to the community. You have the power to restrict such predatory businesses from continued operation in your city and to restrict new predatory businesses from opening in your city.

We are all aware that pet stores source animals from mass breeding facilities to maximize profits and, though these facilities may be USDA licensed, they have deplorable conditions and inspection violations. Puppies are bred in deplorable conditions, sold to pet stores, trucked in all kinds of weather to the pet stores who in turn sell them at inflated prices to unsuspecting consumers. A profit-driven industry, puppy mills breed female dogs till they are worn out; the dogs are kept in cages, are not provided adequate medical care, and are provided no socialization. The fate of those dogs who remain at the mill and those deemed “defective” by the mill or by the pet store is, to be sure, unacceptable and a disgrace. There is no doubt that many of the puppies purchased from pet stores end up at a rescue, as a stray or as a surrender at the shelter.

The pet stores, their employees and friends who support them state that we should have choice. However, consumers cannot make an informed choice when the pet stores are dishonest about the source of the pets and about the pets' physical and mental condition. Stating you want choice knowing that animals are sourced from puppy mills indicates you want an animal who suffered from cruelty and neglect. Some pet store supporters claim that shelter pets also have medical issues; however, many shelter animals have originated from puppy mills via pet stores.

Please include a ban on the retail sales of cats and rabbits who also suffer in the pet trade industry.

Pet stores that sell animals are detrimental to our community, but they can be beneficial when they adopt a compassionate, honest and responsible business model by sales of pet products and pet services and, if they choose, by facilitating the adoption of pets from rescue groups and shelters.

My pets have always been adopted. I do not purchase products or services from stores that sell animals (including rabbits, birds, reptiles, rodents, etc.) because I know the cruelty inherent in mass breeding for profit. Cruelty is never good business.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Judith Werr  
Phone: 954-772-4085

**From:** [Steve I](#)  
**To:** [Eggers, Dave](#)  
**Subject:** Re: No! to Pet store / Puppy Mill outlets  
**Date:** Monday, December 6, 2021 5:59:20 PM

---

**CAUTION:** *This message has originated from outside of the organization. **Do not** click on links or open attachments unless you are expecting the correspondence from the sender and know the content is safe.*

Commissioner Eggers,

Please help bring Pinellas into the modern age by ending retail dog/cat pet stores in Pinellas County and by not grandfathering in existing stores.

Just like before the majority of voters banned greyhound racing, and the greyhound racing industry started creating duplicate and fake rescues to indicate a false support, we have also seen new pet stores open (in the hopes of being grandfathered) while this issue has been on the table. Please send a message that puppy mills will not be supported in Pinellas, like so many other jurisdictions have already done.

These "Pet" stores are simply "factory outlets" for puppy mills. We all know that. Reputable breeders do not sell to retail stores.

Puppy mill dogs put a strain on our pet welfare resources (like our underfunded county animal control department and facility), and the local SPCA and Humane Society. Additionally, they strain breed specific rescues, all of which are volunteer enabled and taxpayer funded (through direct taxation, grants, or donor tax deductions).

Puppy mill dogs and their retail outlets (that we now have six of staining our county) impact us negatively by:

- 1 - flooding the local adoption market with unnecessary dogs, when local adoption facilities are forced to euthanize their "surplus".
- 2 - having their often diseased or compromised animals dumped on local adoption agencies when the owners do not want to deal with high vet bills.
- 3 - dumping their brood bitches and spent sires onto local rescues when they are done with them, leaving the volunteer agencies to foot the bills.
- 4 - damage the reputation of breed specific rescues who end up stuck with puppy mill rejects who need to be rehomed, rather than legitimate and healthy dogs.
- 5 - damage the reputation of reputable breeders who seek to improve the breeds they deal with by breeding out traits that compromise their dogs. These are often traits that are bred into the dogs by the inbreeding that occurs at puppy mills.

Clearly, the 2018 election showed us that Floridians care about animal welfare, as we took it

upon ourselves to correct the failure of the State legislature to act.

It is time for you to act. Please do not fail on this issue. End retail pet stores in Pinellas. There are too many dogs and cats being killed each year here already.

Thank you,

Steve Infanti  
St Petersburg.