



Honorable Thomas J. Rooney, Chairman
House Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry
Washington, DC 20515

Re: OPPOSITION TO HR 835 Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety Act (PUPS)

Dear Chairman Rooney:

The undersigned organizations oppose HR 835/S 707 Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety Act (PUPS).

PUPS amends the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) to reverse a long-standing, court tested basis for commercial pet business licensing and regulation. Bill proponents state their legislation "closes a loophole" in federal law although the AWA was never intended to apply to in-home breeders selling at retail.

Without precedent, PUPS invades the privacy of American homes and sets questionable standards for pet care, sanitation, handling, exercise, and housing.

As written, PUPS will negatively impact many private breeders who cannot comply with commercial standards in a residential setting or who refuse to have their rights to privacy in their homes and financial documents invaded by federal inspectors. PUPS new licensing criteria will even impact the dog rescue community by forcing them to redesign facilities in order to meet federal requirements. Through enforcement of these unrealistic commercial standards on the residential hobby breeder or pet rescue organization, PUPS would reduce the ability of the American public to obtain healthy privately bred or rescue dogs of their choosing.

There is no substantive evidence to prove that expansion of the existing AWA to cover an entirely new sector of small private entities will raise animal welfare to a higher level than properly enforcing current regulations and licensing those kennels operating commercially without USDA licensure. A better plan would be to improve USDA's enforcement ability and ensure that commercial kennels are properly licensed.

Expansion of regulatory responsibilities into the private sector, including shelters and rescue, will most certainly require exponential increases in APHIS staff and funding. Expansion of this magnitude is not only impractical but irresponsible and is not an efficient use of limited departmental resources.

We urge you to reject this legislation.

Respectfully,

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cc: Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman Senate Committee on Agriculture Nutrition & Forestry

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