

- SUBJECT:** Prohibiting the sale of certain dogs and cats by for-profit pet stores
- COMMITTEE:** Business and Industry — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — C. Turner, Crockett, Lambert, Ordaz Perez, Patterson, Shine, S. Thompson
- 2 nays — Hefner, Cain
- WITNESSES:** For — Lain Kahlstrom, Animal Wellness Action; Mindi Callison, Bailing Out Benji; Jessica Land, Dog Ranch Rescue 501c3; Mark Solano, Houston PetSet; Shelby Bobosky and Stacy Sutton Kerby, Texas Humane Legislation Network; Pamela Boich; Shannon Greer; Terri Palleschi; Rebecca Whitehouse; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Ian Randolph, Animal Legal Defense Fund; Lauren Loney, The Humane Society of the United States; Kelley Dwyer)
- Against — Chase Purser, Katy Area Veterinary Medical Group; JC Planas, Legal Counsel for Petland Franchisee; Elizabeth Kunzelman, Petland Inc; Jaime Trueba, Petland San Antonio; Albert Sardinias, Puppyland; Paul Camilo, Veterinary Consultation Services; Luis Marquez; Joshua Nie; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Sabrina Brown, American Kennel Club; David Moreno and Jay Suj, Petland; Linet Canela; Arti Patel; Jake Patel)
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1818 would prohibit a for-profit pet store in a county with a population of 200,000 or more from selling a dog or cat unless the pet store obtained the animal from an animal control agency, an animal shelter, or an animal rescue organization, as defined by the bill.
- A pet store would be required to keep a record documenting from which animal control agency, shelter, or rescue organization the store obtained each dog or cat in its possession for at least one year following the date the store took possession of the animal. The store would have to make the records reasonably available for inspection by the organization from which it received the animal and to post in a conspicuous location affixed

to each animal's enclosure the name of the organization from which the animal had been obtained.

A pet store that sold a dog or cat not obtained from an animal control, animal shelter, or rescue organization would be liable for a civil penalty not to exceed \$500 for each dog or cat it sold in violation of the bill. The attorney general could bring an action to collect the penalty.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021, and would apply only to a dog or cat obtained by a pet store on or after that date.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

CSHB 1818 would tighten rules about from where pet stores were allowed to source dogs and cats and would protect the health of these companion animals and the consumers who buy them.

Many larger pet stores in Texas import animals from out of state to sell locally. Meanwhile, Texas has one of the highest euthanasia rates in the nation, with some 100,000 dogs and cats put down each year. In addition, there have been reports of Texas consumers purchasing expensive puppies from for-profit pet stores only to discover when they brought the animal home that their new pet was sick. New pet owners can incur large veterinary bills treating sick animals and heartache if their pet dies, and sick animals have been known to infect their owners.

CSBH 1818 would address these concerns and provide shelter dogs and cats the chance to find a forever home by requiring for-profit pet stores in larger areas of the state to only sell dogs and cats obtained from animal control, shelters, and rescue organizations.

Many Texas pet stores, both large and small, already comply with the provisions of CSHB 1818, either voluntarily or to obey local ordinances. Requiring for-profit pet stores in more densely populated regions to sell only dogs and cats acquired from animal control, a shelter, or an animal rescue organization would not impose an unreasonable burden.

**CRITICS**

CSHB 1818 would impose restrictions on pet stores in certain parts of the

SAY:

state, which could hurt small businesses and potentially drive some pet stores, especially smaller shops, out of business. Pet stores do their best to keep animals healthy, and the state should not interfere with their private operations. Moreover, it can be difficult for pet shops to partner with local shelters as a source of dogs and cats due to frequent outbreaks of disease in shelters. Texans should be able to choose where they obtain their pets. And many prospective pet owners prefer puppies, which can be in short supply at shelters and rescue organizations.