

## ***Legislation – What’s Hot !***

### **PENDING ILLINOIS STATE BILL - CONCERNS .....**

Joan Miller, CFA Legislative Information Liaison

May 14, 2014

This is the time of year when most State Legislative sessions are starting to wind down and bills are either suddenly pushed through or else they die in committee. There are several pending bills that could impact cat fanciers now or eventually in the future. One example is a bill to amend and add to the Illinois Animal welfare Act.

**Illinois House Bill 4056** is a contentious proposal that started as a “spot” bill or “place saver” (one word was changed). It sailed through the House as a minor bill having to do with swine. It was then recently amended in the Senate to become a full blown pet store ban on the sales of dogs or cats unless they come from shelters or animal control agencies. On May 1<sup>st</sup> Governor Quinn announced his support of the legislation saying it would “end ‘Puppy Mill’ sales at pet shops”. This would make Illinois the first State in the U.S. that bans the selling of dogs, **and cats**, in pet shops unless they are from an animal shelter or animal control facility. HB 4056 (Amendment 001) is being heard on May 14th in the Illinois Senate Executive Committee. The bill has been put on the Senate calendar for a final reading, and is expected to be signed by Governor Quinn, unless opposition can persuade the committee and/or the Governor otherwise.

Our concerns –

- HB 4056 does not allow pet shops to sell any cats or dogs acquired from a breeder; only animals from a shelter or animal control facility. According to Kristen Strawbridge, Illinois State Director for HSUS, this bill “will drive the market toward responsible breeders and adoptions of homeless animals from shelters and rescues instead of puppies produced in puppy mills”. *In actuality* – Many pet stores are equipped to cage and handle kittens and puppies who are cared for in the store for a short period. Dealing with adults who may not be adopted/sold for a long time would be impractical for most small, independent stores. The demand for purebred dog and pedigreed breeds cannot be met by “responsible breeders” who are being forced by national USDA regulations and the Illinois Animal Welfare act to keep their numbers of females to 4 or 5 in order to avoid federal licensing or State “Cattery Operator” requirements.
- Animal activists behind this bill, and concept, assert that stopping the retail pet shop market for pedigreed cats and purebred dogs, which they claim are produced by large commercial breeders, is the way to end what they call “puppy mills”. *In actuality* - it appears from various websites that pet store bans are a step toward eventually preventing ALL purposeful breeding and selling of pedigreed cats/purebred dogs. This will give a monopoly to the growing and powerful “Animal Protection” industry. Shelters, and their pet shop locations, eventually may be the only above ground place where a person can acquire a cat or dog in the future. Many of these proposals include an “exemption” for “hobby

breeders” of cats and dogs. But, the unrealistic restrictions and limits on animal numbers end up negatively impacting dedicated fanciers with a good breeding program.

- HB 4056 language removes, almost entirely, the existing State lemon law provisions that currently protect pet buyers who obtain their dogs and cats from pet stores. *In actuality* - this means that the shelter/animal control derived animals can be sold with little buyer protection if the pet becomes sick other than that which the pet shop may have established as their own policy.
- Amendment #2 has now removed the requirement that pet shops cannot accept cats and dogs transferred from shelters outside of Illinois directly to the store. They had to go to the shelter first for altering and microchipping. *In actuality* - The pet shops in the State could become an endless receiver of puppies/kittens from shelters in all parts of the country, since puppies and kittens attract buyers. What will happen to the older adults who languish in the Illinois shelters? The pet stores will prefer the young and cute?
- Proponents say that HB 4056 will stop pet euthanasia in the shelters. *In actuality* – Illinois has passed several laws in the last few years that supposedly would end shelter euthanasia. The Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association alert this week stated, in opposition to HB 4056, that “Anna's Law (Pet Overpopulation Control Act), legislation to establish the Pet Population Fund, and the Pet Lemon Law ” had all passed as the newest answer to this problem. They also said that there is little to no enforcement for the laws that have been passed.

HB 4056 comes on the heels of the City of [Chicago pet store ban](#), which passed this year and goes into effect on March 1, 2015. Similar ordinances have been enacted in many local jurisdictions around the country. These ordinances are promoted by the HSUS, the ASPCA, the Puppy Mill Project, the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association and other organizations.

The ISVMA stressed that “the time and resources of this General Assembly and the lobby groups that continue to pass these laws would be better spent on public education to better inform prospective pet owners of their choices in selecting a new pet and the responsibilities of pet ownership.” This makes sense !!

Be on the lookout for similar proposals in your State and be ready to write to Governor Quinn should AB 4056 make it out of the Illinois Senate Executive Committee. Contact us for more information at [legislation@cfa.org](mailto:legislation@cfa.org)