

Cat Fanciers' Association -- Pet Lover Alert

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The "Pet Animal Welfare Statute of 2005" (PAWS) Senate Bill 1139/House Bill 2669 - May 2005

Should your next pet cat or dog be home-raised by a local hobby breeder, or would you rather buy a pet raised in a cage by a commercial breeder hundreds if not thousands of miles away?

The "Pet Animal Welfare Statute" (PAWS) is a bill to amend the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA). For almost forty years the AWA has been used by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to regulate commercial activity in animals. This includes transportation, handling, housing, treatment and care of certain animals, which includes the licensing of persons who deal in dogs and cats sold as pets for commerce and profit. The current law and regulations exempt retail sales by home-based hobby breeders who raise pets in their own homes and do not sell wholesale or for research. This allows many dog and cat breeders to be exempt from federal licensing requirement because they sell direct to the ultimate pet owner, buy no animals for resale and sell no animals to other dealers.



PAWS requires federal licensing and inspection of the private homes of hobby breeders who exceed the statutory minimum. This would include many small to moderate size hobby breeders who place pets directly from their homes and are exempt under the current law. The AWA and its regulations assume inspection of large, commercial activities. For example, USDA regulations assume separate caging in sterile environments, and all but prohibit carpet and furniture in areas occupied by the cats and dogs! The AWA is totally unsuited to pets raised in the home. Home-based hobby breeders, used to treating pets as part of the family, will be unable to comply, and have to stop raising cats and dogs. Health and socialization of pets will suffer.



PAWS seeks to dramatically expand USDA responsibility, bringing many thousands of home-raised pets within the scope of federal inspection and regulation. The USDA itself had suggested that licensing home-based hobby breeders "could severely strain available Federal resources for carrying out inspections and other enforcement activities under the AWA..." PAWS would *overwhelm* the ability of the USDA to enforce the AWA for those it was intended to regulate - large commercial breeders who sell dogs and cats at wholesale. Cats and dogs will suffer as a result.



Rescue groups and private animal shelters could be regulated if they sell or place more than 25 pets per year. Small rescue groups and shelters may be held to the standard of commercial animal facilities or have to cease operation.

If PAWS passes, pet owners and animals lose out. Home-based hobby breeders unable to comply with Federal commercial licensing standards or unwilling to cage and isolate their pets will no longer raise pets. The large, commercial breeders and wholesalers will be the only source of cats and dogs in your future.

Contact both your U.S. Senators and your Congressmen to let them know you oppose the PAWS bill as it is written. Watch for CFA Legislative Alerts and Action Updates online. These will be posted on the CFA website (www.cfa.org). Your help is critical.