



June 9, 2014 Statement by  
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The New York State Animal Protection Federation represents all the humane societies, animal shelters and animal welfare organizations throughout New York. We are heartened to see so many Albany County Legislators coming together to sponsor Local Law C which would regulate pet sellers in Albany County.

In the weeks since I testified at the Local Law C hearing, I know there has been a lot of back and forth between the sponsors of the bill and its opponents. They seemed to have raised the traditional political bugaboos to scare sponsors and supporters from their sole goal of protecting puppies, dogs and consumers.

They have said this bill will cost taxpayers; that it will close businesses; that it unfairly targets pet brokers and dealers. Honestly, as I've said in the past, I would think reputable pet brokers and dealers would welcome this bill because it is an opportunity for them to showcase how well they care for their dogs and puppies.

But more troubling than this rhetoric is their negative spin on our local not-for-profit humane societies and animal welfare organizations. Their moniker, a retail rescue group, is inaccurate and simply insulting. Take for a moment a group you are all familiar with—the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society. With full disclosure in mind, I am a Mohawk Hudson donor and was president of its board.

Mohawk Hudson is a 501-C-3 which is almost fully supported by charitable giving. Folks like you and I contribute to the Humane Society so that it can fulfill its mission of caring for abandoned and homeless animals, advocating for them and preparing them for adoption. It is not a retail operation—it doesn't run on a profit margin nor does it only take in young dogs and cats--animals that are easily adoptable. Go to their website and you'll see plenty of senior dogs and cats. It's not about retail. It's about rehabilitation and relocation into loving homes.

Tonight, Albany County will take the humane step forward with the passage of Local Law C. All this bill does is make it tougher for unscrupulous backyard breeders and pet sellers to do business. It is not about anything else.

This bill will hopefully eliminate irresponsible breeding where dogs spend their lives in tiny, cramped, wire-floored cages that are stacked on top of each other, often outdoors with no protection from the elements. Day in and day out, year in and year out, they live in deplorable, unsanitary conditions with little or no care from veterinarians. They are sick and forced to breed puppies for sale to unsuspecting consumers.

When these mills are shut down, it is the local humane societies, animal shelters and animal welfare organizations that bear the financial brunt of this inhumane treatment. The medical costs for every puppy mill dog brought to the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society here in Albany County is \$250—that's twice what a rescued or stray dog needs in veterinary care.

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As I previously told you, one of our members, the SPCA Serving Erie County took in 232 dogs from puppy mills in 2013. The cost to treat those dogs was \$30,614.56.

These are hard costs assumed by our members. It's not the retail heaven picture those opposing this bill have painted.

Rescuing these animals is core to the mission of humane societies, animal welfare organizations and shelters. We will always do what is right for these animals despite the cost.

Let's not forget, when a puppy mill or irresponsible breeder is shut down, there are also municipal/taxpayer costs. Law enforcement gets involved, animals need to be transported, and at time, temporary shelters need to be set up. There are legal and judicial costs when a case is investigated and goes to court. There are higher costs for the unassuming consumers who unsuspectingly buy sick puppies who are brought into a family to be loved and cherished. There are all kinds of hard costs involved with unchecked breeding and puppy mills.

There are also the costs of inhumane treatment:

- The sadness and sickness of these animals.
- The distress caused by forced breeding.
- The incomprehensible desire to put profit over puppies.

The time has come for Albany County to lead. Adopt Local Law C tonight. It's the humane thing to do.