

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 29, 2022

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20228

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We write to request that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) consider updating its standards of care for dogs living in commercial breeding facilities regulated under the *Animal Welfare Act* (AWA). These updates are necessary to ensure breeding facilities provide dogs with proper care.

This Congress, we introduced the *Puppy Protection Act* (S. 1385), which would amend the AWA and provide several critical updates for the humane treatment of dogs by licensed breeders operating in the United States. The legislation would ensure dogs receive adequate housing, caging, feeding and watering, human and other animal socialization, and veterinary care.

USDA has the authority to update these standards, and most responsible breeders are already meeting them. More than half of the dog breeders regulated by USDA already reside in states with laws that prescribe higher standards of care, including Ohio, Missouri, and Pennsylvania.

American consumers assume that “USDA-licensed” dog dealers meet high standards for raising dogs. However, too many American consumers have been disappointed to find out their dog lived in substandard conditions before purchase, and often deal with the repercussions of a sick puppy once they’ve purchased the dog. We are hopeful that USDA will take the long-overdue step of ensuring its regulatory standards of care for dogs meet the expectations and demands of the American public.

The need for increased standards of care for dogs in USDA-licensed facilities is evident through strong congressional support for the *Puppy Protection Act*. We encourage USDA to update its regulatory standards of care to embrace the requirements embedded within this bill.

While we commend USDA for its efforts to ensure that dogs and puppies are better protected under the AWA, we urge the agency to ensure the way dogs are cared for in USDA regulated facilities meets the expectations of the American public. Thank you again for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



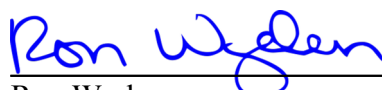
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



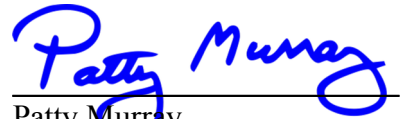
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



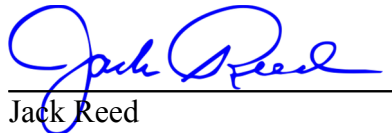
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
U.S. Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator