FLORIDA: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
Co-hosted by the Animal Legal Defense Fund and The Humane Society of the United States

2/16/22
10:30AM–12:30PM ET

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
aldf.org/webinars
2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
PRIORITY ISSUE:
Puppy Mills, Retail Pet Sales Bans and Preemption
WHAT IS A PUPPY MILL?

A large-scale commercial breeding facility where dogs are overbred to produce puppies for profit.

Dogs are generally kept in barren, unsanitary cages with poor nutrition, dirty water, no opportunity to socialize or exercise, and no access to veterinary care.

This is where the vast majority of “pet store puppies” come from.
PUPPY MILL TO PET STORE PIPELINE

PUPPY MILL

BROKER

RETAIL PET STORE

CONSUMER
LOCAL RETAIL PET SALES BANS
Critical for Protecting Companion Animals

Examples:
• Manatee County
• Orange County

www.humanesociety.org/pmlocalities
SB 994/HB 849 PREEMPTS LOCAL RETAIL SALES BANS

- Sponsored by Senator Manny Diaz (R-36) and Representative Juan Fernandez-Barquin (R-119)
- Does NOT protect pets – misleading bill title
- Would preempt new local retail sales bans for cats and dogs as well as invalidate retail sales bans passed in Orange and Manatee Counties
- Would prohibit municipalities from enacting a prohibition on pet retail sales
Local Business Protection Act: SB 620 Senator Travis Hutson/HB 569 Representative Lawrence McClure: If a municipality passed an ordinance that negatively affected a business and that business suffered a financial loss of 15% or greater, this bill would provide a path for that business to claim damages.

*Ask: contact your house member and respectfully let them know this bill would be bad for animals, especially puppies! (more on this later)
SB 420 Sen Jason Pizzo & HB 425 Rep Michael Grieco (champions), SUPPORT

- Makes bringing a minor to an animal fight a felony
- Increases sentencing guidelines for criminal convicted of animal fighting (still 3rd degree felony but provides for stiffer penalty)
- Makes the sexual abuse of an animal a felony! Currently it’s only a misdemeanor in FL. This criminal act is obviously animal cruelty but is also the number one predictor for the sexual abuse of children.
CARE FOR RETIRED LAW ENFORCEMENT DOGS

SB 226 Senator Bobby Powell  HB 25  Rep Sam Killebrew (Killebrew is champion), SUPPORT

• Provide yearly fund to assist with care of retired law enforcement dogs
• Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs program is created to establish a stable funding source for the veterinary care of retired K9 officers
• Not to exceed $1500 per year to cover veterinary expenses
• The department will contract with a non-profit to administer and manage the program
Cosmetic Animal Testing
SB 1718 Sen Lauren Book / HB 1270 Rep. Kristen Arrington: prohibits sale of cosmetics tested on animals, SUPPORT

Veterinary Telemedicine SB 448 – Sen. Jason Brodeur / HB 723 Rep James Buchanan: Veterinary telehealth, SUPPORT
S.B. 614/H.B. 721
Breed neutral policies in public housing

Sponsored by Senator Ileana Garcia (R-37) and Representative James Buchanan (R-74)

Extends Florida's ban on breed specific policies to Public Housing Authorities.
AUTHORIZATION OF RESTRICTIONS ON DANGEROUS DOGS

• Best Friends leading this bill
• Currently local municipalities cannot enact policies based on breed of dog and because HUD defines Public Housing Authorities as quasi-government entities, PHA's that adopt breed specific regulations are already operating outside of legislative intent
• Studies consistently show breed has no bearing on a dog’s behavior or propensity to bite
• There is a growing awareness that BSL does not improve community safety and penalizes responsible dog owners and their family companions
• The American Veterinary Medical Association doesn’t support BSL because they know a dog’s breed has nothing to do with its propensity to bite or be aggressive. Focus should be on responsible pet ownership and spay/ neuter.
S.B. 198/H.B. 349
Seagrass Mitigation Banks

Sponsored by Senator Rodriguez and Representative Sirois

Would authorize the Florida Board of Trustees to create seagrass mitigation banks, making coastal development easier and putting manatees even further at risk.
S.B. 172
Courtroom Animal Advocate Program

Sponsored by Senator Jason Pizzo (D-38)

Would create a courtroom animal advocate program to allow volunteer attorneys to represent the interests of animals in criminal cases or civil proceedings to ensure that the interests of the animals are being considered.
HB 6003
Legal Rights of the Natural Environment

Sponsored by Representative Anna Eskamani

Prohibits preemption against ‘rights of nature’ ordinances and again empowers local governments to grant certain legal rights related to the natural environment.
S.B. 238/H.B. 711
Threatened and Endangered Species

Sponsored by Senator Shervin Jones (D-35) and Representative Ben Diamond (D-68)

Would require Florida officials to continue to protect threatened and endangered species even if the federal government removes a species from its lists.
SALE OF DOGS & CATS

LEMON LAW

SB 1750 Sen Tom Wright and HB 1061 Rep Linda Chaney (champions), SUPPORT

• Pet Lemon Law
• **Background:** Consumers who purchase puppies and kittens from pet stores frequently report sick and dying puppies, deceptive sales tactics, misrepresented purchase agreements, and unfair financing
• Removes the option for pet stores to include a waiver of the consumer’s right to return the pet for congenital or hereditary disorders
• Contract requires that both the consumer and the pet store sign copies of a written notice informing the consumer of their rights under this lemon law
• Pet store must disclose medical history to buyer
• This bill would give consumers the right to seek reimbursement for veterinary costs above the purchase cost of the animal
• If financing utilized, 3 day waiting period required
H.B. 253
Statewide Retail Pet Sales Bans

Sponsored by Representative Sam Killebrew (R-41)

Would prohibit pet stores from selling dogs and cats. A statewide solution that is similar to many of the local retail sales ordinances.
Heads up FWC is updating their rules on trapping in the months ahead and we will need your help!

Stay tuned!

We prevailed on great rule changes for nonnative reptiles just last year - advocacy does work!!!

Next meetings: March 2 & 3 in Tampa; May 4 & 5 TBD; & July 13 & 14 TBD

www.myfwc.com
ANIMAL LAW SECTION
flabaranimals.org

- Animal Law Section of the Florida Bar
- Urge you to join and get active
- You don’t have to be a lawyer!*
- The general purpose and objectives of the ALS are to promote the study and understanding of laws, regulations, and court decisions involving animals
- ALS can & does support/oppose legislation
HOW TO LOOK UP AND CONTACT YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS

www.myfloridahouse.gov/

www.flsenate.gov/
THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

Follow up questions:

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