



## SUPPORT THE PET SAFETY AND PROTECTION ACT, H.R. 2224

**Protect Family Pets and Promote Integrity in Animal Research.** This legislation will end the abuse-ridden system whereby Class B dealers sell “random source” dogs and cats to laboratories for experimentation.

### THE PROBLEM

Random source Class B dealers, licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), collect as many dogs and cats as possible to sell to research facilities. Many of these animals are acquired through fraud, deception, and outright theft. These dealers are exploiting a loophole in the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) that allows them to buy dogs and cats from virtually anyone as long as the seller states he or she bred and raised the animal—which is inherently impossible to prove. The dealers pay very little for the animals, but then sell them to laboratories for hundreds of dollars each.

The AWA, passed in 1966, was intended to stop the sale of family pets for experimentation. Yet nearly 50 years later, Class B dealers are still selling illegally acquired dogs and cats. The animal victims are often hauled across at least one state line, making it nearly impossible for their families to find them. Dealer records are often incomplete or falsified to conceal the true origins of the animals.

Too often, dogs and cats suffer greatly at B dealers’ premises. The dealers have been cited for failure to provide animals with veterinary care, sufficient food, clean water, safe and sanitary cages, and protection from extremes of weather. Of the remaining six Class B dealers licensed



to sell dogs and cats for research, two are under investigation for AWA violations documented during USDA inspections. One who closed was indicted on federal charges that include identity theft and mail fraud. Many past and present investigations relate to “tracebacks,” the USDA’s effort to establish if dogs and cats sold by B dealers were acquired legally. This is a time-consuming process that can lead to dead-ends—but often enough leads to evidence that the dealer acquired animals illegally.

In response to requests from Congress (in a previous farm bill and Labor/Health and Human Services appropriations bill), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded a study by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) on the use of Class B dealers. The study ultimately determined that there is no scientific need for Class B dealers, and the animals can be obtained from other sources.<sup>1</sup>



*For dogs in the clutches of a Class B dealer, existence can be very bleak.*

The NIH has finally taken steps to prohibit its extramural grant recipients from obtaining dogs and cats from Class B dealers. The ban on cats took immediate effect in February 2012; the ban on dogs takes full effect in 2015. (Two decades ago, the NIH banned the purchase of dogs from such dealers by its intramural researchers.)

Many other research facilities no longer acquire random source dogs and cats from Class B dealers. However, a minority of facilities continue to use them, ignoring the fact that through inhumane treatment of the animals and the sale of illegally obtained animals, these dealers are breaking the law. Not only does the bad publicity associated with these dealers reflect badly on the laboratories, but there is also a cost to the research itself. The NAS report found that random source dogs and cats from Class B dealers “oftentimes...are not free from disease and may require prolonged quarantine, socialization, treatment, or removal from the study altogether to avoid potential threats to other animals or people in the research facility.” This impacts both the cost and the reliability of the research.

Congressional action is essential to ensure that the progress made so far is not reversed, to better protect pets from winding up in labs, to safeguard scientific integrity, and to end the corrupt practices of random-source Class B dealers once and for all.

## THE SOLUTION

Reps. Mike Doyle (D-PA) and Chris Smith (R-NJ) have reintroduced the Pet Safety and Protection Act (PSPA) H.R. 2224, which does the following:

- » Prohibits the sale of random source dogs and cats to laboratories by Class B dealers;
- » Prevents stray animals, who may be lost family pets, from being sold to laboratories;
- » Removes the financial incentive to illegally acquire dogs and cats who would then be sold by Class B dealers to research laboratories; and
- » Establishes integrity in the provision of dogs and cats for research purposes.

The Pet Safety and Protection Act will **not** prevent Class A dealers (breeders) from supplying animals to laboratories. It will **not** prohibit research facilities from establishing breeding colonies and supplying dogs or cats to other research facilities. It will **not** prohibit individuals from volunteering their animals for treatment with experimental drugs or procedures (a current practice).

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<sup>1</sup>National Research Council (US) Committee on Scientific and Humane Issues in the Use of Random Source Dogs and Cats in Research. Scientific and Humane Issues in the Use of Random Source Dogs and Cats in Research. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2009. Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK32671/>

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