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Pet Store Sales Banned in Some US Cities

posted by: Angel Flinn 25 days ago



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"Buying an adorable puppy or kitten at your local pet store may become a thing of the past, if more American cities join a small but growing movement to ban retail pet sales."

MSNBC.com recently ran a story about the movement to ban sales from pet stores, in favor of adoption from local shelters.

"West Hollywood, California, became the latest city to put a leash on pet sales in February, when its city council unanimously approved an ordinance prohibiting sales of dogs and cats in retail stores. Albuquerque, New Mexico, and South Lake Tahoe, California, have also banned pet sales. Other cities in Florida, New Mexico, Missouri and elsewhere are considering similar bans on the sale of dogs and cats."

According to MSNBC, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where the ban was put into place in 2006, the results have been positive. Since the ban started, "animal adoptions have increased by 23 percent and euthanasia at city shelters has decreased by 35 percent".

These figures make it clear that it would be significant if this ban were implemented nationwide, or even better... worldwide. Of course, if the ban were extended to all breeding of companion animals (including by those referred to in the article as 'reputable breeders'), we would see

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Angel Flinn Angel Flinn is a volunteer for Gentle World, a non-profit educational organization dedicated to...

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those numbers increase at an even more substantial rate.

Finding reliable statistics in regard to the numbers of animals killed in shelters every year is tricky, because there are issues with accuracy in reporting. And when we're talking about worldwide numbers, it seems to be almost impossible to get accurate figures. It's also difficult to find statistics that take into account the many other species of 'companion' animals who are killed in addition to cats and dogs. Rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs and other unwanted animals are also killed, every year, in increasing numbers. Rabbits, who are the third most popular animal used as pets, are also, not surprisingly, the third most frequently abandoned.

The following was sent to me recently in an e-mail exchange with Linda Nunn, who runs an operation called Animal Re-Homing New Zealand:

"I am going through a time when there are not enough hours in the day to help all of the animals I am being alerted to. There seems to be an epidemic of people abandoning the animals previously in their care and getting rid of their senior dogs and cats in favor of "cuter" pups and kittens. It's heartbreaking..."

As in almost every other country around the world, in New Zealand (despite the fact that pet stores and breeders seem to have no problem finding a market for the animals they sell), healthy dogs and cats, as well as other animals, are put to death every year, for no other reason than the fact that there is nowhere for them to go.

In the US, according to many estimates, more than four million cats and dogs are killed in shelters every year. That's a difficult figure to comprehend, but what it actually means is that more than 280 cats and 180 dogs are put to death every single hour of every single day. All the while, puppy mills alone breed an estimated two to four million dogs in the US every year.

What many people do not realize about shelter animals is that they don't all come from homes where they are no longer wanted. Many of them are actually 'unsold' animals from pet stores themselves. In addition to those who end up being killed at the shelters, there are inestimable numbers of pet store animals who end up being 'disposed of' some other way. According to some sources, these animals can end up being killed on site, or, probably more frequently, they get returned to the breeder. In the case of animals from mills, this likely means they end up being killed at the mill, turned into breeding animals, or sometimes even sold to vivisection labs.

Of course, a ban on pet store sales (even if it were implemented nationwide) is only a tiny step in the direction of lessening the needless deaths of nonhuman animals at the hands of people. Unfortunately, even the language in the article about the ban demonstrates how our attitude toward animals is still so degrading... The shelter's adoption center is described as a 'boutique', where people can "shop for shelter dogs in a pleasant, retail-like environment."

Don't get me wrong – I can see how that would help to increase adoption rates, and that's what matters most to the animals who have been adopted out of that center. And sure enough, on that subject, the results speak for themselves:

"Her goal was to adopt out 45 animals in the first month; instead, they placed 118 animals in new homes. Adoptions have been so plentiful, Weigle said, that her organization is preparing to open a second adoption



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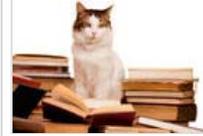
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boutique.”

And that is fantastic. It's just that the whole idea of 'shopping' for live beings makes my very skin crawl. It reminds me of that [incredibly powerful image](#) of the store-front with the words 'Negro Sales' above the door.

And of course, the article gives voice to certain other attitudes that are commonly-held, but really have no place in a world where we ought to be doing all we can to save the lives of those nonhumans whose most basic interests have been sacrificed on the altar of human desires...

"When you go to a shelter, you don't know what you're going to get. A lot of them have emotional baggage. You're taking a risk..." and "I don't want other people's problems. I just wanted to start fresh..."

I find this kind of outlook to be deeply disturbing. Shelter animals are, after all, facing death if they don't get adopted. While animal advocates mourn the rising death rate of homeless animals, and those who care about this atrocity frantically circulate heartbreaking reports of yet another desperate animal facing the gas chamber, or lethal injection... we never stop to examine the reasons we bring these beings into existence in the first place, or (even less so) whether it just might be an unethical practice that ought to be stopped altogether.

I'm not talking now about puppy mills or rabbit mills, or 'irresponsible breeders'. I'm talking about the entire paradigm of breeding animals for our own purposes. When did we decide that it was our right to bring these innocent others into a world that, from their perspective, is cruel indeed? What makes us think that we have any right to buy and sell the lives of other sentient beings, or to make a trade of separating families and selling babies, simply so that people can own 'pets'?

It would be unethical to breed animals even if there was a home for every single animal being bred. But what makes it worse is that these individuals are not even guaranteed that they will be cared for. In increasing numbers, they continue to find themselves discarded, thrown aside like so many of the other 'playthings' we buy for ourselves and our children. And, in increasing numbers, they end up being sent to death, for no other reason than that the vast majority of people think nothing whatsoever of walking into a store and buying a 'new' puppy, or a 'new' kitten, rather than choosing to fill the space in their homes and hearts with someone to whom the opportunity represents nothing short of a second chance at life itself.

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Mervi R. says

Jul 2, 2010 7:15 PM

Excellent post Angel, couldn't agree more!

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Beng Kiat Low says

Jul 1, 2010 7:56 PM

Thanks.

send green star



Beng Kiat Low says

Jul 1, 2010 7:55 PM

Thanks.

send green star



Ben D. says

Jul 1, 2010 11:03 AM

Now I'm not saying I condone the torture of animals by any means. I personally have a few pets. I don't consider them possessions, or status symbols. They are family members to me and I love them dearly. The simple fact that you said that, Dan C., tells me that you think of animals as pets symbols. Your statement of veganism made me sick. Do you know what the natural law is? or the circle of life? Obviously not. Veganism itself seems to be a status claim for those who are, because it seems you look down on anyone who is not a vegan. I believe in animal rights, but not at the cost of human rights. Have you ever examined your teeth?? You have k-(teeth like everyone else, for CHEWING MEAT!! It is the natural way of things. Do you think lions, and other carnivores should be vegans too??? I didn't think so. My point is, you can care for the rights of animals and help them flourish without depriving your body of its NATURAL desire for the vitamins proteins, and minerals it NEEDS from eating meat. Anyway live your life the way you want, don't push it onto others. It is wrong to tell others how to live THEIR life.

send green star



Ben D. says

Jul 1, 2010 10:44 AM

Owning a pet is not slavery. Even working animals I don't consider to be "slavery". Many of you are taking this too new extremes. And by the way, pushing veganism on whom ever reads this post is just plain arrogant and snobbish. Anyway, do any of you work for a living? If so do you consider yourself a slave? Probably not, we work in exchange for money. Many dogs work in exchange for food, shelter and they get good exercise from it as well. If you are referring to leashes, those are simply for the protection of people and other animals that might be roaming the area. Pull your butts down off of your high horses and rejoin reality. Many animals are pets and stand a better chance of living a longer life when they are cared for by humans. I'm not saying that there aren't many exceptions to this like dog fighters and illegal breeders, but if you

spray and neuter all dogs and cats, and stop the breeding of them all together, you are basically like Hitler, controlling the population of a species. And not after too long there won't be enough dogs and cats to care for for many who need that companionship. What about seeing eye dogs? Are you telling me that you would rather see a blind man stuck in his home afraid to go out because he can't see, rather than having a good companion to guide him from place to place? That is just sad when you care more for animals rather than your fellow man/woman. Without your fellow man/woman you wouldn't have many of the things you hold dear today..

send green star



Dan C. says

Jun 16, 2010 10:44 PM

P.S. -- One of the reasons we strongly advocate for veganism is that property status will not and cannot be abolished until we live in a predominately vegan society. And as long as animals are property, there will be no end to the torture and injustice that 10 billion of these innocent beings (not including aquatic sentient beings) will endure annually in the US alone (about 56 billion annually worldwide).

For anyone reading, I highly recommend learning how to prepare vegan foods. There are many great vegan food blogs available on the web.

send green star



Dan C. says

Jun 16, 2010 10:32 PM

Barbara,

Angel and I are opposed to "shopping for" and buying animals in the same way that we would oppose "shopping for" and buying orphaned children. We are all for adoption of animals by caring people, just like we would be all for adoption of orphaned children by caring people.

I think you should learn more about animal slavery (i.e. animals as property) and its consequences for animals before you claim that it is wrong to compare it to American human slavery and human genocide. The horrific consequences of both depend entirely on sentient beings as the legal property of others with no legal standing in court and no basic rights of their own.

We are for the abolition of the property status of all sentient beings.

send green star



Lori K. says

Jun 16, 2010 12:32 PM

Thank-you! All of us involved in rescue yearn for the day when:

- puppy mills close down,
- the fine for breeding without a license is greater than the amount made by selling puppies,
- irresponsible pet owners face huge fines for neglecting to

spay/neuter their pets,

- and all animals are in loving homes until the day they peacefully leave us.

Closing down all pet stores would be a good 1st step. If only.

[send green star](#)



Angel Flinn says

Jun 16, 2010 11:34 AM

Just to make it clear, what I said in the article that you are referring to, Barbara, was this:

"the whole idea of 'shopping' for live beings makes my very skin crawl."

I think that's quite reasonable.

[send green star](#)



Barbara Kuyper-cross says

Jun 16, 2010 12:33 AM

In closing I would like to add one final thought.

After all this dialogue, still you do not effectively address the belittling of American Slavery, for that is what your comparison was. The Atlantic Slave Trade was a holocaust, no less. A greater Holocaust than that perpetrated by Hitler for it resulted in more deaths, and equally heinous. Many Americans have been scarred by the continued sociological, cultural and economic (the cycle of poverty) effect of this dark stain, and your comment opens fresh wounds.

I will drop off this thread, now for I foresee no moderating of what I view to be a fallacious comment in an otherwise worthy article.

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