

HF 2627: RETAIL PET SALE BANS HARM CONSUMERS, PETS, AND SMALL BUSINESSES

HF 2627 would ban the retail sale of dogs and cats in Minnesota pet stores. While the intent of the bill may be to improve animal welfare, evidence from states that have enacted similar bans shows the opposite outcome. When regulated pet stores are eliminated, pet sales do not stop. They move into less transparent markets where consumers have fewer protections and animals have less oversight.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR MINNESOTA

HF 2627 would remove one of the most transparent parts of the pet market.

Licensed pet stores operate in the open and provide consumers with:

- Health guarantees and veterinary records
- Documentation about where pets come from
- Education and guidance for new pet owners
- A physical place where consumers can return for support

Eliminating regulated businesses does not eliminate demand for pets. It simply shifts that demand into markets with far less oversight.

CALIFORNIA'S EXPERIENCE

California passed the first statewide retail pet sale ban in the United States in 2017. It provides the clearest real-world example of how these policies play out over time.



1 Resellers replace regulated pet stores. An LA Times investigation found that once pet stores were removed from the market, “a network of resellers — including ex-cons and schemers — replaced pet stores as middlemen,” selling puppies through parking lots, online marketplaces, and other unregulated channels



2 Puppy scams surged. According to the Better Business Bureau Scam Tracker, puppy scams increased **350% in the two and a half years following the ban**, as consumers increasingly turned to online sellers and were often defrauded or sold sick animals with no recourse.



3 Sales moved further underground. Without licensed retailers, pet transactions increasingly occur in private settings where there is little transparency or accountability.



4 Shelter intake issues remain. Despite the ban, California shelters remain overcrowded, demonstrating that retail pet sale bans do not address the root causes of animal welfare concerns.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PET STORE SALES ARE BANNED?



Sales move into unregulated markets. Puppies are increasingly sold through online marketplaces, social media, and informal networks with little accountability



Consumers lose protections. Regulated pet stores provide health guarantees, documentation, and a physical place for consumers to seek help.



Transparency disappears. Without licensed retailers, it becomes harder for regulators and consumers to trace where animals come from.



Demand for pets does not disappear. Families still seek pets, but must turn to other sources.