

2020 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 68

Offered January 13, 2020

Designating December, in 2020 and in each succeeding year, as Puppy Mill Awareness Month in Virginia.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 11, 2020

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 24, 2020

WHEREAS, Virginia's proud agricultural heritage has ingrained in its citizens a tradition of responsible stewardship of animals; and

WHEREAS, the worldwide use of dogs as companion animals, as vital partners in law-enforcement and military duty, for therapeutic situations, as service animals for the disabled and blind or visually impaired, and in other noble roles is a testimony to the intelligence, devotion, and value of these animals and to the respectful treatment they deserve; and

WHEREAS, these long-standing traditions have been put in jeopardy by out-of-state, large-scale commercial dog breeding operations, many of which have been repeatedly cited for violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act and are transporting and shipping puppies into the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, commonly known as puppy mills, there are more than 10,000 such breeding operations producing more than two million dogs each year in the United States, with countless other dogs imported from other countries; and

WHEREAS, dogs from puppy mills are often underdeveloped, sick, or suffer from genetic deformities or behavioral defects as a result of poor socialization and mistreatment, and some may even die only days or weeks after purchase; and

WHEREAS, many pets purchased as holiday gifts come from puppy mills, and animal welfare organizations see increased numbers of rejected and unwanted dogs following the holidays; and

WHEREAS, tolerating the inhumane treatment of adult breeding dogs, where profit is put above the welfare of the dogs, and the sale of unhealthy puppies to consumers in Virginia and other states constitutes an abdication of the responsibilities of good citizenship and good stewardship; and

WHEREAS, greater transparency within and oversight of this industry will yield a better outcome for dogs, responsible dog breeders, and consumers and will increase Virginia's national standing as a champion for animals; and

WHEREAS, Virginians are encouraged to observe Puppy Mill Awareness Month by supporting efforts to raise awareness of puppy mills, support rescue organizations, and promote responsible dog breeding and responsible pet adoption; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly designate December, in 2020 and in each succeeding year, as Puppy Mill Awareness Month in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Humane Society of the United States so that members of the organizations may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate post the designation of this month on the General Assembly's website.

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