



Memorandum of Support – S.4234 (Gianaris)/A.6298 (Rosenthal)

Prohibits the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits by retail pet shops; authorizes space for adoption

House Rabbit Society is a rabbit rescue and education non-profit organization, with members and two chapters in New York state. We support bill S.4234/A.6298 to prohibit the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits in retail pet shops. Pet stores sell mass-bred rabbits that are raised outdoors in small, dirty, wire cages without proper nutrition or access to veterinary care. S.4234/A.6298 would end pet store sales of rabbits bred in inhumane conditions, and would decrease the volume of unwanted rabbits entering municipal shelters in New York.

In our 30-year history, House Rabbit Society chapters have rescued more than 50,000 rabbits - many were previous impulse purchases from pet stores. Since 2013, our chapters have assisted animal shelters with large-scale confiscations totaling more than 5,000 rabbits, including confiscations from pet trade breeders where rabbits raised were in inhumane conditions.

Baby rabbits in the pet trade are weaned early at 3-4 weeks of age - their underdeveloped immune systems make them susceptible to illness. In pet stores, baby rabbits are marketed as cute, low maintenance children's pets. Guardians purchase them on impulse, ill-equipped to care for rabbits' complex needs for an 8-12 year lifespan. When rabbits hit adolescence and display hormonal behaviors, many unprepared guardians abandon rabbits to overburdened municipal shelters or in the wild to fend for themselves, a certain death sentence.

S.4234/A.6298 will allow pet stores to provide space to local shelters and rescues to showcase animals available for adoption. This has an added benefit of helping to reduce animal overpopulation in New York State.

In California on Jan. 1st of 2019, a ban on pet stores selling rabbits, dogs, and cats went into effect. At House Rabbit Society's California headquarters, we are starting to see decreases in the number of rabbits coming into California animal shelters, and we are hopeful that the numbers of rabbits coming into shelters will continue to decline. A decline in the numbers of rabbits coming into shelters means a decline in euthanasia and a greater ability for shelters to focus lifesaving efforts on the animals in their care.

For these reasons, HRS enthusiastically supports S.4234/A.6298 and urges its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Martin".

Anne Martin, PhD
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn Sailer".

Dawn Sailer
Board President