

**Sportsmen's and Animal
Owners' Voting Alliance**

*Working to identify and elect
supportive legislators*

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August 28, 2005

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
Chairman, Senate Agriculture Committee
416 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1005

Vote No on S1139 – PAWS

Dear Chairman Chambliss:

The undersigned groups of U.S. pet owners write to you and other members of the Senate Agriculture Committee to express our grave concern over Senator Santorum's S1139 "Pet Animal Welfare Act of 2005" a.k.a. PAWS. The enclosed list of 252 pet breed and local clubs, pet registries, rescue organizations and related groups that oppose PAWS demonstrate that this bill is of significant concern to the vast majority of the nation's purebred dog and pedigreed cat owners. The opposition of individuals and these groups, representing millions of Americans, has previously been communicated to Senator Santorum, the bill's cosponsors and their staffs in thousands of emails and phone calls.

S1139 changes a portion of the Animal Welfare Act's definition section to scrap the existing court-tested regulatory mechanism for deciding which animal sellers must be federally licensed. Existing law and regulation employ a sale's wholesale or retail character. PAWS substitutes a complicated, unworkable system based on numbers of dogs and cats sold, or litters raised. The universe of USDA regulated entities is immeasurably increased and many canine hobby breeders, all hunting dog owners, most animal rescuers, every pedigreed cat breeder and parties as diverse as 4-H youngsters who raise rabbits and birds will be forced to give up their animals, or be federally licensed and inspected. Since very few of these entities will be able to meet the 60 pages of USDA regulated seller standards, they will be forced to stop the breeding and placing of quality pets. This will result in 69 million American pet-owning households relying more heavily on pet stores supplied by large commercial breeders and a large reduction in home hobby breeding.

Senator Santorum's July 27, 2005 Congressional Record statement describing PAWS, its supporting rationale and intended impacts have been carefully examined. Rebuttal and response comments from numerous sources have been compiled and are enclosed.

Equally disturbing is the concern that PAWS fundamentally reverses decades of established federal public policy and negates an important legal victory by the Department of Agriculture. An analysis of these topics by Jeffrey Helsdon, Esquire is also enclosed.

Finally, there is the overarching question of whether S1139 or some variation of it needs to be passed at all, given its barely discernible increase in animal welfare, severe ancillary damage and very high cost. An eloquent letter from a Rocky Mountain dog owner on this subject is the final enclosure.

We urge that the Senate Agriculture Committee vote No on S1139 and would be pleased to answer any questions about the bill or this submittal.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert J. Kane
Sportsmen's and Animal Owners' Voting Alliance



Susan Wolf
North Carolina Responsible Animal Owners Alliance



Kelly Wichman
Dog Federation of Wisconsin

Enclosures:
S1139-HR2669 Opposition List
Senator Santorum Rebuttal
Jeffrey Helsdon's PAWS Analysis
Ann Billington letter