



hongkongdogrescue  
2006/08/18 AM 08:09

To nsyeung@legco.gov.hk  
cc  
bcc  
Subject Prevention of Cruelty Acts (Amendment) Bill 2006

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PREVENTION OF CRUELTY ACTS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2006

As founder of Hong Kong Dog Rescue and as such someone who deals with abandoned and mistreated dogs on a daily basis, I have very strong views on the current lack of up-to-date laws to deal with the many cases of animal cruelty. Pet ownership has become the rule rather than the exception it was when the current laws were drawn up. There also need to be recognition by the courts that cruelty to animals is a serious crime and worthy of heavy fines and even imprisonment. I believe that even with the laws as they stand, very few people are convicted, and of those who are the punishment is far too lenient. It has been proven many times over that there is a strong connection between cruelty to animals and violence to humans, including children. I believe it is time that the Hong Kong Government acknowledged that in a modern society, where pets are a normal and healthy part of life, cruelty to animals must be taken very seriously.

#### PET SHOPS

There are far too many pet shops in Hong Kong selling sickly puppies who come from "puppy mills". These puppies are often underage, undernourished (to keep them small), and are kept in cages without any comfort. Apart from the obvious suffering on the part of the puppies, and their mothers, having small, cute and cuddly puppies in shop windows encourages impulse buying by people who have no idea about the proper care and keeping of a puppy. Many of these buyers don't even know that puppies grow into dogs. This ignorance caused untold suffering, and results in the abandonment of many animals when their owners either tire of them or realise that they are living creatures that require time and attention. I would like to see a complete ban on the sale of puppies in pet shops, but failing that, at least some regulations about minimum care required (ie. age of puppy not less than 8 weeks, size of cage, proper care in terms of feeding and companionship for the puppy). I would also like to see a ban on the placing of any puppies (or kittens) in pet shop windows to discourage impulse buying. Puppies should also all be vaccinated and microchipped before sale.

#### ABANDONMENT OF PETS

As a recent survey in My Pet magazine highlighted, many people simply abandon their pets on the street or in country parks when they don't want them any more. Puppies and dogs are seen simply as an accessory by many people, and there needs to be proper punishment for anyone who abandons their pets in this way. Fines need to be relative to the owner's income, and imprisonment for repeat offenders considered. AFCD kennels are full of pets picked up from the street. Not only is this intolerable cruelty, but these abandoned dogs, if they survive, mate and produce puppies that also have to scavenge to survive.

#### ABUSE THROUGH IGNORANCE

As earlier mentioned, many of the people who buy puppies from pet shops have not the faintest idea about the proper care and requirements of a puppy or dog. Many dogs are kept

in cages like hamsters, and never taken out for walks. Giant breeds are kept in very small apartments. There is an urgent need for a Pets' Charter to be set up, and implemented, setting out the minimum requirements for the keeping of a dog.

This should include:

- that every dog must have adequate food, water and shelter (not kept on a roof in the blazing sun with no shade or water, a common occurrence).
- that every dog must have minimum space according to its size.
- that every dog should have minimum exercise (many dogs are never taken for a walk in their entire life, including large dogs)
- that every dog be treated with compassion, and that cruelty will be punishable by law
- that every dog should be taken to a vet if they become ill (not abandoned, as many are)
- that every dog should be desexed unless registered for breeding (this is the only way that the number of unwanted puppies born every year in HK can be halted).

The most important thing of all is that the punishment for any acts of cruelty to animals should be dealt with in the courts, and that fines should be heavy enough to act as a deterrent and prison sentences imposed for deliberate and serious cases (such as the maiming or killing of an animal, or the keeping of animals in a way that causes suffering). Any prison sentence should take into account the automatic reduction of most sentences, to ensure that the actual time spent in prison is not just a matter of days or a few months. This should also include a lifetime ban on the keeping of pets.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Andersen  
Founder  
Hong Kong Dog Rescue  
AWAG Committee Member