

Governor Quinn Signs Law to Protect New Pet Owners

Written by Grant Klinzman
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“Puppy Lemon Law” Protects Those Who Buy Dogs or Cats from Pet Shops

CHICAGO – Governor Pat Quinn today signed a new law that protects those who purchase dogs or cats from pet shops. The legislation gives buyers protection for pet purchases and helps to reduce the possibility of the emotional trauma that comes from losing a pet. The new law is part of Governor Quinn’s commitment to protect pets and their owners, while ensuring that all animals in Illinois are treated ethically and responsibly.

“Our pets are part of our families, and it is a heartbreaking experience for anyone to go through when a new family member arrives home sick or dying,” Governor Quinn said. “This law offers more protections against ‘puppy mills’ and gives people who purchase a new dog or cat more choices as they select a new pet.”

Senate Bill 1639 was sponsored by State Senator Dan Kotowski (D-Park Ridge) and State Representative Michael Zalewski (D-Riverside). It gives those who purchase a dog or cat the option of a full refund, exchange or veterinarian bill compensation if a licensed veterinarian determines the animal was sick or diseased when purchased. The law also offers the same options if a veterinarian determines the animal has a congenital or hereditary condition that requires hospitalization, surgery or has caused its death. Pet shops must also provide buyers with each animal’s medical history, and notify the Illinois Department of Agriculture immediately when they become aware of any contagious or potentially life-threatening diseases among the animals in their possession.

The new law does not apply to not-for-profit animal adoption operations such as animal shelters.

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“This law will both protect consumers as well as our pets,” Senator Kotowski said. “It will reduce the spread of diseases by discouraging breeders and pet stores from selling unhealthy dogs and cats.”

“The main goal of this new law is to protect consumers and animals while encouraging pet stores to work with reliable and safe breeders, not the ‘puppy mills’ that purposely withhold medical information when selling to pet stores,” Representative Zalewski said. “Illinois is now the 21st state to implement such a law, recognizing the importance of cracking down on unscrupulous practices and helping to minimize the heartache of losing a family pet.”

The law takes effect January 1, 2014.

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