



American Border Collie Association, Inc.

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December 17, 2005

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Pet Animal Welfare Statute (PAWS), S.1139

Dear Senator Grassley:

I am writing on behalf of the American Border Collie Association, Inc., the largest Border Collie registry in the United States, with a membership of more than 13,000. Although we deplore the mass production of dogs in puppy mills, and therefore support the goals of S.1139, we must oppose the bill as currently written because we believe it would be uniquely damaging to the working Border Collie breed.

The Border Collie is the premier stockdog in the world; countless farmers and ranchers across the United States rely on the help of Border Collies in their livestock operations. The dogs' usefulness depends on innate working ability, which is maintained only through expert breeding by knowledgeable and experienced working breeders. These breeders are not high-volume producers – rarely will they whelp more than six litters in a single year. However, unlike puppy millers or hobby dog show breeders, they do regularly sell a handful of dogs that they have not bred themselves. For example, they may import a quality dog from Great Britain – the wellspring of the working Border Collie – for sale to a friend or a student, or with the intention of keeping it, but later find it not suitable for their needs and sell it. Likewise, because training a stockdog is a high art, and the best breeders tend to be the best trainers, they will often buy a couple of young dogs to train and sell on as fully-trained stockdogs.

Under S.1139, these breeders would become subject to federal regulation, even though they are small-scale breeders of high quality dogs, rather than the disreputable mass producers at which the bill is aimed. Our best breeders make only marginal profits and often whelp their pups in the farmhouse kitchen. If they were to cut back or cut out their breeding, as they would almost certainly do if faced with the requirements of federal regulation, the loss to our breed and to the livestock operations that depend on good working dogs would be enormous.

If §2(C)(ii)(I)(bb) of the bill were amended to reflect our concerns, by changing it to read

(bb) does not whelp more than 6 litters of dogs or cats, and does not sell more than 6 dogs or cats in addition to those bred or raised on the premises of the person, and sells only at retail to persons who purchase such animals for their own use and enjoyment;

it would not weaken the bill's effectiveness but would go a long way toward remedying the problems that cause our registry to oppose this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration. If we can help you further in understanding and addressing our concerns, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,