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## **FURRY BABIES FIGHTS TO PROTECT ANIMAL WELFARE**

*Diverse group of animal welfare organizations oppose HB 1711*

**Springfield, Ill.** — Furry Babies, a majority female owned and operated pet store is urging the Illinois Assembly to vote against HB 1711 and work to pursue legislation that improves the lives of dogs across the state.

“If we are truly interested in the welfare of our family pets and not in advancing the extreme agenda of special interest activist groups, implementing breeder standards ensures the highest quality care for dogs and puppies entering our communities,” said Ana Soskic, owner of Furry Babies pet stores.

HB 1711 jeopardizes animal welfare in a few key ways:

- While pet stores would be shut down, rescue operations could continue to purchase from any breeder or from a dog auction thus perpetuating puppy mills.
- It fails to raise any animal standards or protections.
- It severely limits customer choice on where to get their pet next.
- Creates a monopoly for rescues by imposing a “double standard.” It requires a state warranty for commercially bred dogs to now cover rescue dogs, but only those sold by pet stores, rescues would not be required to provide a similar warranty. Leaving the rescue/shelter market largely unregulated and making it more dangerous for animals.
- It does not address the issue of substandard breeders across the state and penalizes responsible breeders.
- This bill will drive consumers to shop online for their next pet, where they won't be able to verify the quality or standards of care for the animals. Putting consumers at risk to fall prey to internet scams.

Further, Fury Babies commissioned a poll by Adam Geller of National Research Inc. Six hundred registered voters were surveyed between May 13 and 16th. The results have a plus or minus 4 percent margin of error. Key findings from the poll include:

- Voters responded strongly to the fact that special interests are really pushing this for their own agenda, regardless of the health and welfare of the animals.
- 53% of residents are opposed to the bill. By party, there is a rare partisan agreement: 59% of Republicans oppose, 49% of Democrats oppose, and 53% of Independents oppose.
- Only 28% of voters support the bill. By party, 21% of Republicans support it, 33% of Democrats support it, and 27% of Independents support it.
- By a net of 14 percentage points, voters would be less likely, rather than more likely, to support a candidate who votes in favor of the bill. Among Independents, the net difference is 17 points.
- The poll shows a plethora of voter concerns about the bill - everything from giving consumers less choice, putting the health of the animals at greater risk, the economic impact and job losses, and the fact that there would be LESS consumer protections, not more.

The following diverse animal welfare organizations are opposed to HB 1711 as introduced: the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, Happiness is Pets, Furry Babies, Citizens for Responsible Pet Ownership, American Kennel Club, Illinois Federation of Dog Clubs and Owners, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council and Protect the Harvest.

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