STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

May 19, 2016

The Honorable Michele Reagan
Secretary of State
1700 W. Washington, 7th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Secretary Reagan:

I am an unapologetic dog lover.

Like all pet owners, I consider my dog, Woody, to be a member of the family. Animal welfare is an issue that is close to my heart and of great personal importance.

Animal cruelty is disgusting and morally reprehensible.

As my record demonstrates, I will not stand for – and the state of Arizona will have zero tolerance for – the mistreatment of any animal. Last year, I issued my first veto in office for a bill that would have weakened protections for animals under state law. In recent days, we have taken significant action to expand protections for animals in Arizona – from ensuring the freedom of Salt River horses to roam free in our state, to ending live Greyhound racing for good. In my campaign for governor in 2014, I was proud to be endorsed by the U.S. Humane Society.

Today, in that same spirit, I signed SB 1248.

In my deliberation process, I ensured my staff thoroughly researched this bill, and I spent considerable time understanding the arguments for and against. In particular, the many comments from concerned citizens on social media have been ones that I've personally read and I've taken to heart because of my passion on this issue.

It's important to understand the facts of the bill. SB 1248 actually strengthens penalties for pet store owners who do not take measures to ensure that the animals under their care are from a licensed, safe, sanitary and humane place.

I'm a vocal supporter of small business and economic development. But I would never, ever, support any business operation that would endanger dogs – and subject future generations of puppies to health risks and defects. That is not a business model welcome in the state of Arizona.

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Shutting down the good guys will do nothing to stop the bad actors. Rather, it will open the doors for more puppy sales through unregulated sources, where abuse and inhumane conditions are more likely. This bill ensures that puppies being sold in pet shops are coming from responsible breeders, and includes strict penalties for store owners who do not comply.

As this action demonstrates, I will continue to support measures that increase protections for animals. If there are bad actors in this state, they will be held accountable under the law.

Sincerely,

Douglas A. Ducey
Governor
State of Arizona

cc: The Honorable David Gowan
The Honorable Andy Biggs
The Honorable Don Shooter