

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON RULES

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, February 3, 2026
10:30 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.

ALSO PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN JEFFREY YOUNG, JR.

BILLS: 250917, 250988, 250989, 251031,
251101

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COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

3

morning, Committee on Rules members

4

and guests. We ask that you please

5

take your seats and this hearing is

6

now called to order.

7

And the Clerk will now

8

take roll.

9

THE CLERK: Chairmember

10

Bass.

11

COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

12

Present.

13

THE CLERK: Vice-

14

Chairmember Squilla.

15

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

16

Present.

17

THE CLERK: Member

18

Gauthier.

19

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

20

Present.

21

THE CLERK: Member

22

Jones.

23

COUNCILMAN JONES:

24

Present.

1 THE CLERK: Member

2 Gilmore Richardson.

3 (No response.)

4 THE CLERK: Member

5 Thomas.

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: A

8 quorum of the committee is present
9 and the Clerk will now please read
10 the title of the bills. Bill No.
11 250917.

12 THE CLERK: Bill No.
13 250917, an ordinance amending
14 Section 14-529 of The Philadelphia
15 Code, entitled "/VDO, Fifth
16 District Overlay District," to
17 provide for building requirements
18 to prevent vacant lots, all under
19 certain terms and conditions.

20 Introduced by Councilmember Young.

21 Bill No. 250988, an
22 ordinance amending Chapter 9-600 of
23 The Philadelphia Code (entitled
24 "Service and Other Businesses") to

1 add business hour restrictions in
2 the Fifth Councilmanic District;
3 and amending Section 14-529 of The
4 Philadelphia Code, entitled "/VDO,
5 Fifth District Overlay District,"
6 to restrict certain commercial uses
7 and make other related changes, all
8 under certain terms and conditions.
9 Introduced by Councilmember Young.

10 Bill No. 250989, an
11 ordinance amending Title 10 of The
12 Philadelphia Code, entitled
13 "Regulation of Individual Conduct
14 and Activity," by adding a new
15 Section to impose a temporary
16 moratorium on the breeding and
17 transfer of puppies, all under
18 certain terms and conditions.
19 Introduced by Councilmember Bass.

20 Bill No. 251031, an
21 ordinance repealing in its entirety
22 Bill No. 241055 (approved December
23 23, 2024), entitled "An ordinance
24 to amend the Philadelphia Zoning

1 Maps by changing the zoning
2 designations of certain areas of
3 land located within an area bounded
4 by Packer Avenue, Seventh Street,
5 Pattison Avenue, and Darien Street.
6 To amend Title 14 of The
7 Philadelphia Code by adding Section
8 14-541 entitled "/PAK, Packer
9 Avenue Overlay District and making
10 other related changes, all under
11 certain terms and conditions."
12 Introduced by Councilwoman Bass for
13 Council President Johnson.

14 And Bill No. 251101 is
15 being held today at the request of
16 the sponsor. There are no other
17 bills under consideration today.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

19 Thank you, Madam Clerk.

20 Do any members have any
21 opening remarks on any of the bills
22 stated by the Clerk today?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And

1 seeing none, will the Clerk please
2 call the first panel we have to
3 testify on Bill No. 250917 -- and
4 actually before we do that, I want
5 to state for anyone who is here on
6 Bill No. 251101, that bill is being
7 held by the sponsor.

8 THE CLERK: Will Paula
9 Brumbelow Burns, Director of
10 Legislation for the Philadelphia
11 City Planning Commission, please
12 approach.

13 (Witnesses approached
14 witness table.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
16 morning. Before we take your
17 testimony, Chair recognizes
18 Councilmember and author of the
19 legislation, Councilmember Jeffrey
20 Young.

21 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
22 you, Madam Chair. And good morning
23 to everyone.

24 I want to thank the

1 Rules Committee for hearing. This
2 bill this morning, Bill No. 250917,
3 the goal of this legislation is
4 real simple. It's to prevent
5 blight in our communities. As many
6 folks know, the 5th Council
7 District holds the most city-owned
8 property. And for the most part,
9 they're all vacant lots, right, so
10 thousands of vacant lots just by
11 the city itself.

12 And so, what we're
13 trying to do here is to prevent
14 I'll say efforts of speculators who
15 are purchasing property in our
16 district, just with the sole
17 purpose of sitting on it, to
18 demolish those properties, to
19 create blight. And when we know
20 that when these properties are
21 demolished in certain communities,
22 that typically is a sign of
23 gentrification to come, right.
24 Because when you demolish that

1 property and you build up, of
2 course you're trying to make more
3 money than the property was
4 originally stated for.

5 As a shell when you
6 rehab a property, the price is
7 typically lower than a brand new
8 house. And so, we're trying to
9 keep homes affordable in our city.
10 We have to put in place tools and
11 mechanisms that allow our
12 communities to stay affordable
13 naturally and also prevent blight
14 from our communities as well.

15 So what this bill is
16 doing is trying to protect the
17 quality of life for residents in
18 the 5th Council District in order
19 to allow them to live in a
20 community that is blight-free. So
21 I want to thank you again, members
22 of the Rules Committee, for
23 allowing this bill to be heard
24 today. And I look forward to the

1 conversation.

2 Thank you, Madam Chair.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

4 Thank you, Councilmember.

5 Chair recognizes

6 Councilmember Jones.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank
8 you, Madam Chair.

9 Member Young, could you
10 elaborate on some of the challenges
11 that are in the 5th District as it
12 relates to speculators, some local,
13 some national, some international
14 that have targeted North
15 Philadelphia and other parts of
16 your district as a right place to
17 buy property, sit on them and then
18 exploit them to the degree that
19 they hire agents to come in and
20 examine not only just publicly-
21 owned properties, but privately-
22 owned, distressed properties and
23 sit on them, causing sometimes
24 decades?

1 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Yes.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can
3 you elaborate on that?

4 COUNCILMAN YOUNG:
5 Absolutely. Member Jones, I can
6 tell you that there are parts in my
7 district, specifically in the 16th
8 Ward, where there are a handful of
9 owners who have owned vacant
10 properties, vacant lots for over 20
11 years, just with no plans in sight
12 to develop, just sitting on those
13 vacant parcels, creating blight in
14 our communities, allowing
15 opportunities for illegal dumping
16 and other activities that happen in
17 our neighborhoods.

18 And so, again the goal
19 of this legislation is to try to
20 prevent that from happening, try to
21 prevent some of what they call the
22 gap tooth in our communities. When
23 we have a whole block full of
24 rowhomes and then someone decides,

1 you know what, I want to sit on
2 this property, but I don't want to
3 take care of it, I don't want to
4 maintain it as a prudent property
5 owner, so I'm going to just
6 demolish it and do the bare minimum
7 care that I need to do while wait
8 for the market in this neighborhood
9 to rise for me to flip this lot or
10 for me to develop a house that's
11 going to cost three times more than
12 what I originally paid for it.

13 So we want to prevent
14 some of those things from happening
15 in the 5th District. The 5th
16 District, you know, there are
17 communities that speculators are
18 just waiting to pounce on just
19 because of the proximity to
20 everything. I love where we live
21 at in the 5th District because I
22 can get anywhere in the city in 15,
23 20 minutes, and other folks know
24 that as well.

1 The majority of the
2 northern part of the district is a
3 community that deals with a lot of
4 issues, particularly with poverty,
5 particularly with being
6 undereducated. And so, people prey
7 on that. People prey on those
8 opportunities in that community.
9 And it's my job as the
10 Councilmember to protect the public
11 health, safety and welfare of a
12 community. So that's why we are
13 putting this legislation forward.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank
15 you, Madam Chair.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
17 Thank you, gentlemen.

18 Chair recognizes
19 Ms. Brumelow Burns.

20 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS:
21 Good morning, Chairperson Bass and
22 members of the Rules Committee.
23 I'm Paula Brumelow Burns, Director
24 of Legislation for the Philadelphia

1 City Planning Commission. I am
2 here to testify on Bill No. 250917,
3 introduced into City Council on
4 October 23, 2025, by Councilmember
5 Young.

6 Bill No. 250917 amends
7 the Philadelphia Zoning Code by
8 amending Section 14-529 of The
9 Philadelphia Code, entitled "/VDO,
10 Fifth District Overlay District,"
11 to provide for building
12 requirements to prevent vacant lots
13 within the Council District. This
14 bill will require an applicant to
15 obtain a building permit to change
16 or expand a principal structure or
17 to build a new structure, before
18 the Department of Licenses and
19 Inspections can issue a zoning
20 demolition permit and a building
21 demolition per government.

22 The Council office
23 worked with the Planning Commission
24 staff on changes to the language,

1 ensuring that renovations of
2 existing buildings were not
3 included in its provisions. The
4 Philadelphia City Planning
5 Commission considered Bill No.
6 250917 at its public meeting on
7 November 20, 2025 and recommended
8 the bill for approval. I'll be
9 happy to answer any questions at
10 this time.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

12 Thank you very much for your
13 testimony.

14 Any questions from the
15 committee?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And
18 seeing none from the sponsor, thank
19 you very much for your testimony.

20 Is there anyone else
21 here to testify on Bill No. 250917
22 whose name has not been called?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

1 Okay. Seeing none, I want to thank
2 you for your testimony.

3 Can we have the Clerk
4 please call the first panel to
5 testify on Bill No. 250988.

6 THE CLERK: Paula
7 Brumbelow Burns, Director of
8 Legislation for the Philadelphia
9 City Planning Commission.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
11 morning. Before we hear your
12 testimony, Chair recognizes
13 Councilmember Young.

14 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
15 you, Madam Chair.

16 Again, this legislation
17 is introduced to protect the public
18 health, safety and welfare of our
19 community. Throughout our city,
20 we've been experiencing an influx
21 of these 24-hour stores that are
22 selling products like CBD, Kratom
23 and other ill products that have
24 negative impacts on our

1 communities, and they're open 24/7
2 literally all day long.

3 And what we are trying
4 to do with this legislation is to
5 ensure that on some of our
6 commercial corridors we prevent the
7 negative activity that comes along
8 with these stores. Right now we
9 have teenagers after school just
10 hanging out in these stores
11 purchasing these products. Some of
12 these stores I've witnessed my own
13 self, they actually sell marijuana,
14 right. I've seen it myself.

15 I don't look like a
16 Councilman every day when I'm in my
17 neighborhood, right, so they don't
18 know who I am. And it's just sad
19 that when these things occur,
20 enforcement is tough because police
21 have to go out there, do an
22 undercover investigation to buy
23 whatever products they're selling,
24 go through this whole show to try

1 to shut a store down and then
2 ultimately these stores open back
3 up.

4 And so, what we are
5 trying to do here with this
6 legislation is to prevent these
7 stores from being open 24/7. You
8 have to have some level of decency
9 and courtesy for your neighbors.
10 And so, what this legislation would
11 do is prevent stores to be open on
12 some of the commercial corridors
13 from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

14 For those who are
15 wondering, it does not affect any
16 restaurants with liquor licenses
17 and things like that. They are
18 governed under a different statute
19 via our state law. And we just
20 want to ensure that as these stores
21 are opening up that sell these
22 under the guidance of selling
23 consumer goods, right, that they go
24 through a process that allows them

1 to be accountable to the community.
2 And that's all we're asking for, be
3 accountable to the community, be a
4 good neighbor to the community as
5 you're coming into our community.

6 It's okay to make money,
7 but be a good neighbor. Be a good
8 steward of, you know, understand
9 that as a business you're providing
10 a service to a community as well,
11 right. Be of that mindset. And
12 unfortunately, we have to introduce
13 legislation like this in order to
14 get certain business owners to be
15 of that mindset, to understand that
16 they're providing a service to the
17 community and we don't want them to
18 be a detriment to the community.
19 So this legislation here again is
20 to protect the public health,
21 safety and welfare of those in the
22 5th Council District.

23 So thank you so much,
24 Madam Chair.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

2 Thank you, Councilmember.

3 Ms. Brumbelow Burns.

4 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS:

5 Good morning. I am Paula Brumbelow
6 Burns, Director of Legislation for
7 the Philadelphia City Planning
8 Commission. I am here to testify
9 on Bill No. 250988, introduced into
10 City Council on November 13, 2025
11 by Councilmember Young.

12 Bill No. 250988 amends
13 Chapter 9-600 of The Philadelphia
14 Code, entitled "Service and Other
15 Businesses" to add business-hour
16 restrictions in the 5th
17 Councilmanic District and amending
18 Section 14-529 of The Philadelphia
19 Code, entitled "/VDO, Fifth
20 District Overlay District" to
21 restrict certain commercial uses
22 and make other related changes in
23 the Fairmount neighborhood of the
24 Lower North Planning District.

1 This bill will require
2 applicants in two specific areas of
3 the Fifth Councilmanic District to
4 obtain a special exception for
5 Sundries, Pharmaceuticals and
6 Convenience Sales, a use category
7 currently allowed by right. This
8 change would apply to two
9 commercial corridors, Girard Avenue
10 from College Avenue to 24th Street
11 and Fairmount Avenue from Broad
12 Street to 24th Street.

13 The Planning Commission
14 staff recommended further defining
15 the concerns and developing
16 solutions to address them. The
17 Philadelphia City Planning
18 Commission considered Bill No.
19 250988 at its public meeting on
20 December 4, 2025, and recommended
21 the bill for approval with
22 provisos. I will be happy to
23 answer any questions at this time.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

1 Thank you very much for your
2 testimony.

3 Questions from the
4 panel, from the committee?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

7 Question from Councilmember --

8 Chair recognizes Councilmember
9 Jeffrey Young.

10 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
11 you, Madam Chair.

12 And I just want to
13 provide for the record,
14 particularly for the Planning
15 Commission, that we did ask this
16 committee to hear an amendment to
17 this legislation. Just so you're
18 aware, the amendment to the
19 legislation states -- it redefines
20 what a commercial establishment is.
21 It is an establishment involved in
22 the buying and selling of goods
23 where consumers primarily purchase
24 goods intended for consumption or

1 use off the premises, including
2 consumer goods as defined by our
3 code.

4 And then it goes on to
5 mention that food establishments
6 with restaurant liquor licenses,
7 drive-throughs, vehicle-fueling
8 stations and pharmacies will be
9 exempt under this particular
10 legislation.

11 We've also added blocks
12 to the legislation, to the
13 amendment. We've added Broad
14 Street, both sides from Spring
15 Garden to Poplar Street. We've
16 also added a Ridge Avenue between
17 Broad Street and West Girard Avenue
18 at the request of those community
19 members. And we've also amended
20 the requirement for a special
21 exception for those who are
22 applying for retail sale of
23 consumer goods. Not necessarily
24 just the Sundries, Pharmacies and

1 Convenience Sales. We've asked to
2 have it amended just to be the
3 retail sale of consumer goods.

4 Because based on the
5 zoning permits that I've seen, that
6 is the category that a lot of these
7 businesses who are selling these
8 products are opening under,
9 consumer goods. And so, we want to
10 ensure that if you're -- if you're
11 a grocery store, sells groceries,
12 right, that's fine. But if you're
13 going to be selling consumer goods,
14 which again all these products are
15 defined in our code under, we want
16 to make sure that there's a level
17 of accountability to the community.

18 Thank you, Madam Chair.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

20 Thank you. Thank you, Councilman.

21 Okay, no --

22 Councilmember Jones. Chair
23 recognizes Councilmember Jones.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES:

1 Member Young and Commissioner, is
2 this similar to the overlay that we
3 introduced in the 4th Ward to deal
4 with the proliferation of bandit,
5 in our opinion, bandit businesses
6 that had the multicolor lights and
7 were doing things that Member Bass
8 has long been on top of, liquor-by-
9 the-drink, loosie cigarettes and
10 other things? Is that kind of the
11 purpose to slow that proliferation
12 down?

13 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Yes,
14 sir, it's along the same lines.
15 Because in the 5th District, there
16 are a lot of commercial buildings,
17 commercial properties being
18 developed with residential above,
19 but the commercial spaces are
20 pretty much vacant because most of
21 the developers really care about
22 the residential units, right.

23 And so, the only type of
24 business that has been renting

1 these spaces are these types of
2 stores that are opened up as smoke
3 shops, right. And we have them
4 next to day cares in our district,
5 so families are walking past these
6 stores every day with the little
7 lighted-up CBD leaf looking like
8 marijuana, right, walking past
9 going to day care.

10 All these folks are
11 hanging out outside of these
12 stores. I'm from North Philly,
13 right. I know what they're doing
14 out there, right. They're not just
15 hanging out saying hello to each
16 other, right, all day long. So we
17 have to make sure that our laws
18 are -- there are laws in place to
19 protect our residents from some of
20 these stores that again are just
21 preying on our communities.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: I
23 would imagine, Madam Chair, that
24 you walk in this store and you'll

1 see one of those illegal gambling
2 machines in there as well.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

4 Thank you. It would not be
5 surprising at all. So thank you
6 for your questions.

7 Any additional
8 questions?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

11 Okay. Is there anyone else here to
12 testify on Bill No. 250988 whose
13 name has not been called?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

16 Seeing none, before we move forward
17 to Bill No. 250989 I do want to
18 take a moment and see if Ken Penn
19 from the Building Industry
20 Association is here to testify on
21 Bill No. 250917. It seems that
22 inadvertently he was not on the
23 witness list.

24 Would you like to come

1 forward and offer testimony again?

2 We are going to be stepping back to
3 the original bill, which was
4 250917, Councilmember Young.

5 (Witness approached
6 witness table.)

7 MR. PENN: Good morning.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
9 morning. State your name for the
10 record and begin.

11 MR. PENN: My name is
12 Kenneth Penn.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
14 Please proceed.

15 MR. PENN: Thank you.
16 My name is Ken Penn and I'm
17 testifying today on behalf of the
18 Building Industry Association of
19 Philadelphia. The BIA is a trade
20 association of small, medium and
21 large residential developers
22 working throughout Philadelphia. I
23 want to thank Chair Bass and the
24 rest of the committee for allowing

1 the BIA to provide testimony today
2 on Bill No. 250917.

3 Councilmember Young's
4 legislation prohibits demolition
5 prior to issuance of a building
6 permit in his district and raises
7 several significant concerns.

8 First, the bill would eliminate a
9 common and practical approach used
10 by developers to seek to begin
11 lawful demolition while a building
12 permit is still under review.

13 Under the bill, this
14 pathway would be arrested, except
15 in cases where a structure is
16 deemed eminently dangerous. This
17 creates a narrow and difficult
18 standard that will unnecessarily
19 delay many projects that are
20 otherwise proceeding in good faith.

21 Second, the prohibition
22 would effectively add months to
23 project timeline, force owners and
24 developers to carry additional

1 holding costs, insurance, security
2 and financing expenses before any
3 meaningful work can begin. These
4 delays will increase overall
5 project costs and could discourage
6 redevelopment of blighted or
7 deteriorated properties in the 5th
8 District.

9 Third, to qualify for an
10 exception based on structural
11 danger, certain property owners may
12 be compelled to intentionally incur
13 code violation or enforcement
14 action to demonstrate instability,
15 which is obviously an inefficient
16 and counterproductive process and
17 incentivizes the very condition
18 that the city seeks to avoid.

19 Most troubling, the bill
20 would prevent demolition of vacant
21 and unsecured structures that are
22 highly susceptible to unlawful
23 occupation. Philadelphia has
24 already experienced multiple fires

1 this winter, many historically
2 linked to squatters and abandoned
3 buildings. By barring timely
4 demolition, the legislation may
5 inadvertently increase public
6 safety risk for neighboring
7 residents, first responders and
8 surrounding properties.

9 Councilmember Young has
10 indicated that he prefers a vacant,
11 dilapidated structure to remain
12 standing even when structures
13 attached to another building,
14 rather than creating a vacant lot
15 that can attract illegal dumping.
16 While this perspective reflects a
17 legitimate urban planning concern,
18 it overlooks the immediate fire,
19 safety and liability risks posed by
20 unstable, unsecured buildings.

21 Although our
22 organization did not oppose the
23 Councilmember's recent insurance
24 legislation, this proposed ban on

1 demolition prior to permit issuance
2 is a dangerous policy. In our
3 view, it exposes the city to
4 potential legal liability in cases
5 where property owners may
6 demonstrate that a structure was
7 difficult or impossible to secure
8 or pose a foreseeable risk.

9 The BIA asks the
10 Councilmember consider limiting
11 this legislation to only those
12 properties that the owners in L&I
13 have not certified and prepared as
14 vacant through a vacant property
15 license issued by L&I. Thank you,
16 Councilwoman.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
18 Thank you for your testimony.

19 Chair recognizes
20 Councilmember Young.

21 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
22 you. And thank you for your
23 testimony, Mr. Penn. And I
24 understand some of the impacts that

1 this will have on the development
2 community, but what I think this
3 bill does, is ensures that property
4 owners maintain their properties in
5 a prudent manner, right. And I'll
6 say this: When I was in the
7 private sector, I represented
8 clients, property owners who were
9 defending their properties against
10 conservatorships, right, because
11 these properties were vacant and
12 blighted.

13 And so, the developers
14 use this law to say, you know what,
15 we're coming to attack your
16 property because you're creating
17 blight on our communities, so we're
18 going to attack your property. We
19 want to take it over, we want to
20 take your equity out. And so, I
21 represented property owners who had
22 to pay thousands and thousands of
23 dollars to secure their properties
24 to be what's called a safe and

1 secure shell. And I think that if
2 you're a developer, you should be
3 held to that same standard, right.
4 You should be held to that same
5 safe and secure shell standard that
6 many people in my community are
7 held to when they get these Act 135
8 conservatorship petitions filed
9 against them, right.

10 And I'm sure and I know
11 for a fact that many of the members
12 of the BIA can afford to make their
13 properties a safe and secure shell
14 over the property owners that I
15 represented in the defense of these
16 conservatorship petitions. So if
17 our community members are going to
18 be held to the same standards, I
19 think the developers should be held
20 to those standards as well. And I
21 think this is a way to try to again
22 prevent gentrification from
23 happening in our communities, a way
24 to try to prevent blight from

1 happening in our communities by
2 ensuring that property owners are
3 able to maintain their properties
4 in a way that is in alignment with
5 our city code.

6 And so, I'm going to ask
7 the members of this committee again
8 to protect those residents of the
9 5th Council District by passing
10 this legislation out of committee
11 today. Thank you so much.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

13 Thank you, Councilman.

14 Is there anyone else on
15 the panel who has questions?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And
18 seeing none, thank you very much
19 for your testimony.

20 Before we move forward,
21 I'm going to ask one more time is
22 there anyone else here to testify
23 on Bill No. 250917?

24 (No response.)

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

2 Okay. And seeing that there's
3 none, Madam Clerk, please read the
4 title of Bill No. 250989.

5 THE CLERK: Sarah
6 Barnett, Executive Director of ACCT
7 Philly.

8 (Witness approached
9 witness table.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And
11 prior to their arrival to
12 testimony -- come on up, come on
13 up.

14 I do want to acknowledge
15 the presence of Councilmember Kathy
16 Gilmore Richardson.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
18 morning.

19 MS. BARNETT: Good
20 morning, Chairperson Bass, Vice-
21 Chairman Squilla and City Council
22 Rules Committee members. My name
23 is Sarah Barnett and I'm here on
24 behalf of ACCT Philly, the city's

1 only open-intake animal shelter.
2 Thank you for the opportunity to
3 testify today in support of Bill
4 No. 250989, legislation that
5 establishes a temporary breeding
6 moratorium for dogs in the City of
7 Philadelphia.

8 Specifically, the
9 temporary moratorium is for 36
10 months from the effective date of
11 the bill, which is 90 days after
12 the bill becomes law. Since 2012,
13 ACCT Philly has provided animal
14 control services to the city. And
15 since its inception that year, ACCT
16 Philly has taken into our facility
17 over 291,000 animals, all from
18 Philadelphia.

19 As an open-intake
20 shelter, we are legally and
21 ethically required to accept every
22 animal that comes through our
23 doors, stray, surrendered, healthy,
24 sick, young, old, from every

1 neighborhood in Philadelphia. Last
2 year alone, more than 20,000
3 animals entered ACCT Philly, making
4 us one of the largest single site
5 animal shelters in the entire
6 country.

7 We are the city's triage
8 facility for animals and the need
9 for our services has never been
10 greater. Prior to the pandemic,
11 our intake was slowly falling. But
12 since the pandemic, we have seen a
13 dramatic and sustained increase,
14 particularly in dogs, growing by
15 nearly 1000 additional dogs every
16 year.

17 In 2025, over 7400 dogs
18 entered our facility. And this
19 year we expect to surpass 8000.
20 It's an average of 22 dogs entering
21 our shelter every single day. This
22 has forced us into a constant state
23 of reaction and triage, where
24 staff, volunteers, rescue partners

1 are doing everything possible to
2 save lives and to meet the needs of
3 the community.

4 One of the first
5 questions I'm asked when people
6 hear those numbers is why is this
7 happening. There are many factors,
8 but irresponsible and unregulated
9 backyard breeding is a major driver
10 of this increase. We see the
11 impact firsthand. We see puppies
12 surrendered because they are
13 literally too big to sell now.

14 We see mother dogs who
15 have been bred repeatedly, only to
16 be abandoned once their bodies give
17 out, many suffering from very
18 preventable medical conditions and
19 conditions caused by repeated
20 breeding. We see puppies arriving
21 sick with parvovirus, which is a
22 highly contagious and often deadly
23 disease that is preventable through
24 very basic vaccines. And we see

1 dogs purchased as puppies from
2 breeders with significant
3 behavioral issues that are making
4 them unsafe.

5 The problem doesn't just
6 impact the shelter system. It also
7 impacts public health, public
8 safety and the quality of life in
9 our neighborhoods. Parvovirus is a
10 virus that lives in the environment
11 for up to six months. It infects
12 other dogs in the community who
13 aren't fully vaccinated.

14 I've watched an owner
15 stand with his 5-year-old dog while
16 the dog died, a dog who never left
17 the house or the yard. The owner
18 was crying and he didn't know why
19 his dog had died from parvovirus
20 because he got him vaccinated. He
21 had one vaccine and the owner
22 didn't know that the dog needed two
23 in order to be protected. The
24 owner brought the virus into the

1 home. The dog never left. The
2 owner brought the virus from the
3 community.

4 We see families who
5 unknowingly purchase a puppy who
6 becomes gravely ill within days,
7 facing thousands of dollars in
8 medical bills and devastating
9 emotional consequences, forcing
10 them to surrender the dog, with the
11 dog then taking up very limited
12 shelter resources. For years, free
13 and low-cost spayed and neuter
14 services have been offered in the
15 city and they're very, very
16 important, but they're not enough
17 on their own.

18 The scale of breeding is
19 increasingly outpacing the system's
20 ability to respond and producing
21 simply too many dogs for
22 Philadelphia's adopters to absorb.
23 While this is happening in
24 communities around the country, we

1 have a unique opportunity because
2 we're fortunate, because thanks to
3 Councilwoman Bass, we have an
4 opportunity to actually do
5 something about it.

6 ACCT Philly has faced
7 challenges over the years and we
8 have made a lot of meaningful
9 progress. Passing this commonsense
10 practical bill empowers us to take
11 a preventative, rather than purely
12 reactive approach to one of the
13 biggest drivers of dog
14 overpopulation in our city,
15 unlicensed breeders.

16 It allows us to focus on
17 a major cause of overpopulation in
18 our shelter and it allows us to
19 focus on lifesaving, community
20 support and responsible pet
21 ownership, rather than constantly
22 chasing the next crisis. This is a
23 temporary, targeted solution to a
24 real and growing problem, and it

1 gives us one more essential tool to
2 protect animals, support residents
3 and strengthen our community as a
4 whole. Thank you for your time and
5 for your consideration. I'm happy
6 to answer any questions.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I
8 want to thank you for your
9 testimony and for you being here
10 today. And I want to say as
11 sponsor of this bill, as a lifelong
12 animal lover and someone who has
13 always gotten all of my dogs and
14 cats from either ACCT or the SPCA,
15 recognizing the need to make sure
16 that we look and see and when
17 possible, adopt animals from these
18 very important shelters that are
19 really doing quite a service here
20 in the city of Philadelphia.

21 There just cannot be --
22 it just can't be underscored enough
23 how important the work of ACCT
24 really is. As a former Board

1 member, I know. I've been there,
2 I've seen the work that this
3 organization does day-in and
4 day-out. And it's really quite
5 heartbreaking to see the number of
6 animals that are coming through,
7 just sort of rotating day-in and
8 day-out, timestamped and you
9 rushing to try to find them a home,
10 a foster, a situation.

11 We were at SCI Chester
12 just recently to visit New Leash On
13 Life with the inmates at SCI
14 Chester and to see the program that
15 they have in which they actually
16 bring in dogs from ACCT. So the
17 work that you all do just really
18 cannot be highlighted enough. We
19 thank you for the work that you do.

20 As a former Board
21 member, I'm proud and honored to
22 stand by you and stand with this
23 bill. I know that we have a ton of
24 support inside this chamber as well

1 as outside of this chamber, as
2 Philadelphians far and wide said
3 it's about time. We're glad to see
4 this happening and we want to see
5 more and they will see more. So I
6 just want to say thank you so much
7 for all that you have done.

8 That being said, I want
9 to open it up if any of my
10 colleagues have questions or
11 comments.

12 Councilmember Squilla.

13 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

14 Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

15 And thank you, Sarah,
16 for testifying, and thank you
17 always for responsiveness to
18 concerns throughout the community.
19 It's very much appreciated.

20 Whether the answer is what people
21 want to hear or not, I think it's
22 important that they get an answer
23 so I think we appreciate that.

24 Do you see the challenge

1 of these I guess unlicensed
2 breeders that would just take
3 advantage of the situation to
4 obviously make money off of this
5 and therefore add to the challenges
6 of ACCT?

7 MS. BARNETT: Yes. I
8 mean, we see it weekly. We see
9 people trying to sell puppies who I
10 think during the pandemic did make
11 money and it was a profitable side
12 hustle, but that has since dried up
13 a bit. So now, when the puppies
14 don't sell, the ones who don't
15 sell, they do dump them at ACCT
16 Philly and they are honest about
17 that. I'll give them that. They
18 come in and they say, I can't sell
19 these and they drop them at our
20 door.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And
22 so, then the number of animals that
23 you have increases because of that?

24 MS. BARNETT:

1 Absolutely.

2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And
3 then, obviously you only have so
4 much room, so much resources. So
5 then it comes an issue of what do
6 you do with those animals at that
7 time --

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
9 Point of information.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
11 Yes.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
13 Point of information. I just
14 wanted to interrupt for one quick
15 question. I wanted to ask, Sarah,
16 if you could detail the amount of
17 space that you have at ACCT to be
18 able to hold animals versus the
19 numbers that come through the door?

20 MS. BARNETT: So
21 ideally, in an ideal world we would
22 be housing 110 dogs and about 120,
23 130 cats as well as a room full of
24 other animals, whatever animals

1 come in. Realistically, I can't
2 remember the last time we were at
3 110 dogs. I think this morning
4 we're at 135 because we really are
5 striving. We want to save lives.
6 So it's a constant battle every
7 morning of figuring out do you put
8 a dog in a crate or do you have to
9 find someone to euthanize. And we
10 generally always go with putting a
11 dog in a crate, but it's very hard.
12 It's very hard. And it has a
13 negative impact on the animals as
14 well.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

16 Thank you. Thank you so much for
17 your work. Appreciate it.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

19 Thank you. Councilwoman, do you
20 have a --

21 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

22 Yes.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

24 Chair recognizes Councilwoman

1 Gauthier.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

3 Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 Are there particular
5 types of dogs that are being bred
6 where you see this overpopulation
7 specifically, just out of
8 curiosity?

9 MS. BARNETT: The three
10 most common dogs that we get in are
11 pit bull-type dogs, German
12 Shepherds and Huskies. Huskies, we
13 know definitively backyard breeders
14 are contributing to the average of
15 one Husky a day coming into ACCT
16 Philly. We did DNA testing to look
17 into that. We also have pit bull-
18 type dogs obviously that breeders
19 will acknowledge when they bring
20 them to our door that they are from
21 breeding. So we see a lot of those
22 dogs as well, but it's harder to
23 track DNA-wise because they all
24 look somewhat similar.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

2 Thank you. Thanks for all of your
3 work and thank you to the bill's
4 sponsor for this important
5 legislation.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

7 Thank you, Council Lady.

8 The one last thing I
9 just wanted to highlight is --
10 well, I think on my very first
11 Board meeting when I was a Board
12 member previously, one of the
13 things that was brought to my
14 attention was a box of puppies
15 found in the park. And
16 subsequently, I found out that that
17 is not uncommon. Can you talk
18 about that because it really was
19 quite shocking and horrifying when
20 I heard that?

21 MS. BARNETT: Yeah, it
22 really is not uncommon. And one of
23 the things that we see frequently
24 actually, and ironically it often

1 happens during storms, where people
2 will say I found a box of stray
3 puppies and they're all remarkably
4 dry, which makes you question it a
5 little bit. But it's not uncommon.
6 We see it. Our neighbors at PA
7 SPCA see it. Between the two
8 organizations, you know, boxes,
9 bags of puppies.

10 And then sadly, you also
11 see the puppies, you know -- what
12 you don't see in the news are the
13 ones that we get calls about.
14 Recently we got a call about a
15 community that was very upset, and
16 rightfully so. There was a box of
17 deceased puppies that was next to
18 the dumpster. And the community
19 was upset because they said this is
20 not the first time it's happened.
21 And those are the stories you
22 obviously don't see on social
23 media. You normally see the
24 puppies that were saved, but there

1 are a lot of animals those puppies
2 represent. It's not uncommon at
3 all.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

5 Well, again we thank you for your
6 work, the very important work of
7 you and your entire team at ACCT.

8 Seeing that there's no
9 more questions from the committee,
10 thank you for your testimony.

11 Madam Clerk, can you
12 please call forward the next panel
13 to testify.

14 THE CLERK: Julie Klim,
15 CEO of PSPCA; Penny Ellison,
16 Adjunct Professor of Animal Law and
17 Ethics at the University of
18 Pennsylvania, Retired Mediator with
19 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the
20 Third Circuit, and founder of Hand
21 to PA.

22 (Witnesses approached
23 witness table.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

1 morning. Please state your name
2 and begin with your testimony,
3 either one.

4 MS. ELLISON: Good
5 morning, Chairperson and members of
6 the committee. My name is Penny
7 Ellison and I've been teaching
8 Animal Law at Penn for the last 20
9 years. I'm also a Board member of
10 the Dog Law Advisory Board for the
11 State Department of Agriculture.
12 And also, I wanted to say that I'm
13 Board Chair of Hand to Paw, which
14 is a job training organization for
15 young people in Philadelphia to
16 learn to work with animals and
17 support pet owners. And a lot of
18 them are here today to see how
19 their government works.

20 So thank you very much
21 for having us. I'm really here
22 today to speak to the legal
23 framework and authority underlying
24 this proposed moratorium. So at

1 the outset, I want to be clear that
2 this ordinance, what it represents
3 from a legal perspective. A
4 temporary moratorium on unlicensed
5 dog breeding and the sale of
6 puppies is an ordinary exercise of
7 the police power that the city has,
8 regulation of animals, particularly
9 where we've heard public health,
10 animal welfare, municipal services
11 are implicated. That's long been
12 recognized as a core local
13 government function.

14 Cities routinely
15 regulate the breeding, sale,
16 transfer, advertising of animals,
17 especially where unregulated
18 activity imposes documented costs
19 on public agencies and creates
20 health and public safety risks.
21 Temporary moratoria are also a
22 familiar municipal tool. They're
23 commonly used where, as we've heard
24 from Sarah Barnett, current

1 existing enforcement mechanisms and
2 policies have just proven
3 insufficient and the conditions
4 have reached an acute level. And
5 frankly, you need to buy time for a
6 longer-term solution to see if we
7 can get this overpopulation of dogs
8 under control.

9 It's also important to
10 talk about how this fits in with
11 state law because we put an
12 exemption into the moratorium for
13 anyone who is licensed by the state
14 of Pennsylvania as a dog kennel, so
15 it's completely consistent with the
16 way state law works. It preserves
17 this lawful pathway for responsible
18 breeders to continue operating.
19 They either have a license or they
20 can apply to the State Department
21 of Agriculture for \$100 and get a
22 license if they are willing to be
23 inspected and comply with the
24 rules.

1 So this moratorium, I
2 want to be clear, it doesn't ban
3 dog breeding. It bans unlicensed
4 dog breeding. So the ordinance
5 relies on the existing objective
6 state framework as the dividing
7 line for the exemption instead of
8 trying to make a case-by-case
9 analysis of whether this was
10 intentional breeding or accidental
11 breeding. If you want to breed,
12 you get a license.

13 This approach is legally
14 sound and enforceable.

15 Conditioning that exemption on
16 licensure is a common regulatory
17 technique because it provides
18 clarity, traceability, inspection
19 authority and consumer protection.

20 So this ordinance represents a
21 careful and defensible use of
22 municipal authority. It aligns
23 with state law. It relies on
24 objective standards and addresses a

1 documented local problem using
2 tools that courts have long
3 recognized as appropriate for
4 cities to use. So I believe that
5 Council should feel comfortable
6 that this legislation rests on
7 solid legal footing. I'm happy to
8 answer any questions.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

10 Thank you very much for your
11 testimony. We're going to hold the
12 questions until the next testifier.

13 Please state your name
14 for the record and proceed.

15 MS. KLIM: My name is
16 Julie Klim. I'm the CEO of the
17 Pennsylvania SPCA. Thank you,
18 Chairperson Bass and Vice-Chair
19 Squilla. We appreciate being heard
20 today. The Pennsylvania SPCA
21 headquarters is located in the
22 Juniata Park section of
23 Philadelphia. It's our largest
24 location. We are currently housing

1 291 animals. 193 of those are
2 dogs. We are down the street
3 virtually from ACCT Philly, whom we
4 partner with.

5 We also house a shelter
6 hospital which provides advanced
7 emergency care for only homeless
8 pets, thousands of them per year.
9 And we also house a public
10 veterinary clinic that is a walk-in
11 clinic open six days a week for the
12 public at a very low cost to
13 provide low-cost veterinary care
14 and surgery services for their
15 pets.

16 So importantly, we're
17 expending a lot of our resources to
18 keep pets out of the shelter system
19 and in their homes where they
20 belong. We also have taken our
21 services to the community who can't
22 get to our facility and provide
23 MASH-style full-day clinics to
24 patients in those communities, and

1 we offer spayed and neuter services
2 and transport services for free to
3 our clinic in North Philadelphia
4 and Southwest Philadelphia
5 communities.

6 So last year, we treated
7 31,700 pets with those services.
8 We also have an Animal Law
9 Enforcement team who covers 18
10 counties in Pennsylvania, eight
11 officers, but four of those are
12 devoted solely to Philadelphia.
13 They are sort of state police
14 officers that enforce the state
15 animal cruelty codes. And last
16 year, we had about 2700
17 investigations in Philadelphia.

18 So I provide all this
19 background because I want to paint
20 a picture of the scope of services
21 we're providing and the fact that
22 despite all of this, our location
23 in proximity to ACCT Philly keeps
24 thousands of pets out of the ACCT

1 Philly shelter system and into
2 ours. And yet, despite all of
3 these resources we are drowning,
4 drowning in dogs especially, and
5 many of these come from unlicensed
6 breeders.

7 So our officers are out
8 in force seeing these cases all of
9 the time. And I think something
10 really changed during the COVID
11 pandemic where everyone wanted a
12 dog because they were staying at
13 home. And before that, we were
14 really getting ahead of the dog and
15 cat population in Philadelphia.
16 And since that time, there was a
17 brief moment where we almost had no
18 available dogs to adopt, and then
19 very quickly the market took over
20 and people started saying, well,
21 there's demand for puppies, I can
22 help fill that demand. And we have
23 not unwound from that all these
24 years later. I think this

1 moratorium would provide a very
2 impactful tool to use to just turn
3 that tide back around.

4 I also just want to
5 anecdotally tell a story about a
6 case that our officers found, which
7 is very emblematic of the resources
8 we're putting toward this problem.
9 An individual decided they wanted
10 to breed their two Cane Corso
11 puppies, large breed dogs that are
12 already overrepresented in the
13 shelter system. And then he
14 decided to get the ears cropped
15 because that's an aesthetic that
16 makes them more salable. Didn't
17 take them to a licensed
18 veterinarian. That's very
19 expensive, so took them to a local
20 guy who does this on the side. The
21 ears got infected.

22 He took the dogs to a
23 local private emergency hospital.
24 When he found out the cost, he

1 abandoned them there. The
2 veterinarians called our officers
3 in because they knew there were
4 more puppies in the home. We went
5 and seized those animals. And then
6 it just started an entire case that
7 took years to resolve because he
8 didn't want to give up his dogs.
9 He didn't want to surrender them,
10 but he had abandoned them. This
11 was animal cruelty so it violated
12 state laws.

13 But I think the real
14 thing to remember here is the cost
15 of breeding was then put on the
16 nonprofit sector, ACCT Philly and
17 the PSPCA are bearing the cost of
18 that business. So it's not really
19 a business if a nonprofit is
20 absorbing all of your costs when
21 things go poorly. When things go
22 well, it's a business.

23 And I think that's why
24 we're really targeting this

1 unlicensed component of this bill.

2 And I think we put so much
3 resources -- Sarah Barnett also
4 referred to parvovirus, which is
5 very common, and a lot of these
6 unregulated breeders are spreading
7 these diseases. As I walked out
8 the door of my shelter yesterday,
9 we had a group of puppies that were
10 brought in from one of these cases,
11 had parvo and now we have parvo in
12 our shelter and we're overwhelmed.

13 And so, I think if we
14 could allay this and put all of the
15 cost and effort we put towards
16 unlicensed breeding towards
17 providing more services to the
18 community, we could make a huge
19 impact and keep pets in their homes
20 where they belong. Thank you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

22 Thank you. And I'd love to have
23 further conversation. I'm sure
24 some of our members of Council

1 would love to maybe have some
2 additional dialogue as well, so
3 we'll set something up so we can
4 have those conversations and figure
5 out what additional measures we
6 could do to really be supportive of
7 folks who want to house a pet with
8 them and may have some economic
9 challenges and therefore find it
10 very difficult to do so. And maybe
11 just with a little bit of help, we
12 can make that situation a better
13 fit for a parent and my fur baby.
14 And so, we're hopeful that we'll be
15 able to have some of those
16 conversations to make those kinds
17 of things happen.

18 So -- oh, I'm sorry.

19 Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

21 Thank you, Madam Chair.

22 I'm not as sort of
23 immersed in this system as
24 Councilmember Bass is. I wanted to

1 know when you talk about doing what
2 needs to happen so that the animals
3 are not going to ACCT, they're
4 going to your shelter, what does
5 that mean? Can you expound on the
6 key differences between the SPCA
7 shelters and ACCT? And what are
8 the key differences and what sends
9 an animal to either place?

10 MS. KLIM: Well, our
11 goals are the same, and it's to
12 help animals. We're a fully
13 privately-funded nonprofit so we
14 get no city funding. We are not
15 an -- for our law enforcement
16 activities, we're an open intake
17 shelter, in that any cases that our
18 law enforcement officers find, we
19 bring in whether we have space.

20 We have four locations
21 around the state so we have some
22 flexibility in being able to move
23 animals out of the city if we need
24 to. We are a no-kill shelter. So

1 our shelter is somewhat -- you can
2 think of it as it's a destination.
3 We're going to keep our animals.
4 We can invest in the long-term
5 medical rehabilitation through our
6 hospital. We have surgeries. We
7 can do many different advanced
8 medical care.

9 We have a team of
10 behaviorists. So if one of these
11 dogs that come in that might have
12 been unsocialized from these
13 litters if they didn't sell, all of
14 a sudden they're an 8- or 10-week-
15 old puppy that ends up in a
16 shelter, and that puppy is now
17 going to potentially have some
18 behavioral challenges and be harder
19 to adopt. So we're more of a long-
20 term solution as a private
21 organization.

22 We can have dogs with us
23 for a year or two years. This Cane
24 Corso case I mentioned, the last

1 one started in 2023 and the last
2 dog was adopted in 2025. So that's
3 kind of the difference. ACCT
4 Philly is the open intake shelter
5 that is funded by the city. But if
6 someone comes to our door, so if we
7 have space, we have been operating
8 at 125% of capacity for dogs
9 routinely over the past two years,
10 which means that our dogs are not
11 in ideal -- so we have a fixed
12 number of cages for an ideal life
13 in the shelter. And if we're at
14 125% of capacity, that means we
15 have dogs packed in, in less than
16 ideal circumstances. And that's
17 what we're finding now due to a lot
18 of these cases.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

20 Okay. And not to be morbid, but is
21 it also that if pets or if animals
22 go to your shelter, is there less
23 of a chance they are euthanized or
24 is there no distinction there?

1 MS. KLIM: Because of
2 our structure, because we have the
3 advanced resources of a hospital
4 and behavioral teams, we're
5 designed to be a destination. So
6 as a no-kill shelter, we don't
7 euthanize for space or time because
8 we have that luxury as a private
9 institution. That's how we're
10 established.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
14 Thank you.

15 Chair recognizes
16 Councilmember Squilla.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
18 Thank you so much and thank you
19 both for your testimony. And as we
20 always do legislation, we look at
21 enforcement. How would enforcement
22 work if somebody was not abiding by
23 the moratorium or decided to
24 continue breeding? How would that

1 be enforced?

2 MS. ELLISON: ACCT is
3 really in charge of enforcement,
4 not PSPCA. But I think that all of
5 us have agreed that the first line
6 of defense is education and
7 providing supportive services
8 funded by public and private
9 dollars to make sure that people
10 that want to come into compliance
11 have the ability to do that with
12 subsidized spay-neuter services.

13 If they refuse that,
14 then it would be up to ACCT how to
15 handle the next steps in terms of
16 whether or not they assess the
17 fine. But I know that the fine is
18 there so that the stick exists to
19 persuade people to accept those
20 supported services.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I
22 want to add to that. The idea
23 behind this in my mind is that the
24 product only exists because there

1 is demand for it. And if we can do
2 a good enough job of educating the
3 public, then that drives up the
4 demand once they know that what
5 they are, number one, doing is now
6 illegal in the City of
7 Philadelphia.

8 But beyond that, the
9 care, the compassion, the thought
10 process behind this being, you
11 know, a living, breathing thing,
12 this is not a stuffed animal. This
13 is something that you have to care
14 for, you have to clean up after,
15 you have to feed, you have to care
16 for. And so, once we I think do
17 our job, our due diligence of
18 providing the level of public
19 education that needs to happen, I
20 think that that in and of itself
21 will bring the numbers down.

22 So thank you,
23 Councilman.

24 MS. ELLISON: I think

1 the public education goes both to
2 the people who might be breeding
3 dogs or have an unaltered dog and
4 to the public to say you shouldn't
5 be buying from unlicensed breeders.
6 And that's why we have the
7 advertising provision in there to
8 make sure that people have to
9 identify the fact that they are
10 licensed or they're a 501(c)(3)
11 rescue rehoming puppies.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And
13 I know you were involved with some
14 other things. And the notion of a
15 dog warden came up on some other
16 issues. Will a dog warden be
17 involved in any notification of any
18 of this?

19 MS. ELLISON: You mean
20 the dog wardens that work for the
21 Department of Agriculture?

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
23 (Nodded affirmatively).

24 MS. ELLISON: No, no one

1 is a mandatory reporter under this
2 law. So if somebody went to a
3 veterinarian to get vaccinations,
4 no one has to report this. So the
5 first line of defense is going to
6 be educating people about the law.
7 People would still be able to get
8 vaccines for any puppies they want
9 to get vaccines for. But the dog
10 warden, I don't think would have
11 anything to do with it.

12 Other than the fact that
13 for now the dog wardens will report
14 to the Pennsylvania SPCA if they go
15 in and inspect a breeder and find
16 conditions that they think violate
17 the cruelty law, then they report
18 it. But there's nothing in this
19 law that requires them to report
20 it.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

22 Okay. Thank you.

23 MS. KLIM: It's also a
24 tool. Right now our officers might

1 see a situation that technically
2 breaks the animal cruelty law, but
3 in effect it might be a person
4 without means to affect that law.
5 And you use the law as a tool to
6 discuss with the person, maybe we
7 can help take some of these animals
8 off of your hands, keep one here,
9 that one you can handle. And I
10 think that's a tool that ACCT
11 Philly will be able to have as well
12 with this moratorium.

13 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

16 Thank you.

17 Chair recognizes
18 Councilmember Young.

19 COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank
20 you. No, I'm not on the committee,
21 but just listening to the testimony
22 here just brought me back to my
23 days in law school where I did take
24 a course by Professor Gary

1 Francione on animal human rights,
2 right. So my question is, can you
3 talk to us about the effects that
4 breeding has on the transmission of
5 chronic diseases and genetic
6 diseases in some of these animals
7 and the long-term costs that it
8 will have on some of the owners who
9 decide to go and buy puppies from
10 those type of breeders?

11 MS. ELLISON: I can
12 speak to some of it, and I think
13 Julie can speak to others. You
14 raised the genetic issue, which is
15 a big issue. As you might know,
16 some of the most popular breeds
17 now, and of course the most popular
18 breeds are sometimes the ones that
19 get overbred because they're the
20 ones that are easily salable, are
21 things like French bulldogs with
22 very flat faces, and they get bred
23 and bred to have flatter and
24 flatter faces, then that makes them

1 unable to breathe.

2 If a responsible breeder
3 might do genetic testing to ensure
4 that their dogs are going to not
5 pass on genetic faults that are
6 going to plague them with health
7 problems throughout life. But if
8 they do it the right way, they're
9 not going to make a lot of money.
10 So the people who are trying to
11 make quick money are not going to
12 do that and they're going to turn
13 out a lot of sick dogs. And a lot
14 of Philadelphians have bought a lot
15 of sick dogs that end up needing
16 thousands of dollars of surgery or
17 end up dying very prematurely and
18 breaking their heart because they
19 were bred irresponsibly. And
20 that's certainly part of what we're
21 trying to address here.

22 And I think Julie and
23 Sarah have both talked about also
24 communicable diseases that come

1 from the failure to spend money on
2 the appropriate vaccines and to
3 keep the puppies long enough so
4 that they can get their
5 vaccinations. Another thing that
6 unlicensed breeders do is separate
7 puppies from mothers too early, so
8 they are both not fully vaccinated
9 and not socialized and end up with
10 behavior problems. Did I just --

11 MS. KLIM: You just
12 answered the question. But I think
13 Sarah and I raised as well
14 parvovirus is a serious disease
15 that if left untreated, is fatal.
16 We're seeing so many cases, like I
17 just mentioned that we have a case
18 in my shelter right now. It
19 spreads like wildfire despite your
20 best intentions. And we have a
21 very skilled hospital -- I have 150
22 employees and 50 of my employees
23 are in our medical services
24 division and our organization.

1 But parvovirus can
2 infect the community's pets as well
3 because it lives on the ground for
4 months. And so, you could take
5 your 1-year-old dog to a dog park
6 and it's catching parvovirus from
7 these unvaccinated animals that are
8 in our community. And we had noted
9 in my testimony that 84% of the
10 parvovirus tests we put out in our
11 clinic last year. So in our
12 30,000-plus patients, 84% of the
13 puppies that were tested were
14 positive for parvovirus. And so,
15 it's highly communicable. And it's
16 really something that's containable
17 but with good practices.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

19 Thank you very much. Good
20 information to have as well. Thank
21 you.

22 Okay. Madam Clerk, is
23 there anyone else to testify on
24 Bill No. 250989?

1 THE CLERK: There are no
2 further panels, Madam Chair.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is
4 there anyone here to testify on
5 Bill No. 250989 whose name has not
6 been called?

7 Okay. Please step
8 forward.

9 (Witnesses approached
10 witness table.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
12 Please state your name for the
13 record and proceed with your
14 testimony.

15 MR. SWEENEY: Rory
16 Sweeney. I live in Old Kensington
17 area, actually in Councilman
18 Young's District incidentally. I'm
19 here speaking on behalf of myself
20 and my wife who is sick and also
21 won't be able to attend Thursday.
22 So please consider these comments
23 to extend there as well. I want to
24 thank you for your leadership in

1 this bill and express our support
2 for it.

3 We volunteer on behalf
4 of an old animal rescue called City
5 of Elderly Love that focuses on old
6 animals that are an imminent risk
7 of disposal. And by disposal, I do
8 mean getting put to death to make
9 room for the daily influx of new
10 dogs to animal control. We choose
11 the animals that we take based on
12 which ones are nearest to their
13 date of termination. So the ones
14 who are soonest going to die.

15 Executive Director
16 Barnett already listed a lot of
17 numbers and stats, so I'll leave
18 our commentary to just our own
19 personal experience. We've been
20 fostering to final adoption for a
21 few years now. And as soon as we
22 get one healthy and rehomed,
23 there's always another waiting.

24 Our two most recent

1 were -- I took some photos this
2 morning. This was Batman and this
3 one was Diamond, and it says she's
4 the most beautiful girl in the
5 world and she was. And both were
6 elderly and both yet still needed
7 to be spayed and neutered and both
8 were within several hours of the
9 end of their timestamp and would
10 have been euthanized.

11 Diamond's case in
12 particular was rough. She was --
13 one of the breeders that Executive
14 Director Barnett talked about, she
15 clearly had been abused from
16 breeding litter after litter until
17 she was no longer useful. When we
18 got her, she was about 20 pounds
19 overweight, terrified of medical
20 treatment and riddled with mammary
21 cancer.

22 The vet told us that the
23 more litters that a dog has, the
24 higher risk they are for mammary

1 cancer. So we had a multi-surgery
2 situation with her. She had to get
3 spayed and then we had to have
4 mastectomies on both sides of her
5 mammary chains. Took quite some
6 time. So that was a rough few
7 months but we got through it and
8 she is no longer with us. She has
9 been exported, and she is now -- we
10 refer to her as Delaware Diamond.

11 People often ask us how
12 we're able to care for these dogs,
13 make connection with them and then
14 ship them out and never see them
15 again. And the answer to that is
16 because shipping one out makes
17 space for the next one. And
18 without the efforts like this bill
19 to address the underlying issues of
20 the problem here, I am
21 unfortunately very confident that
22 there will always be a next one.
23 And so, I appreciate your efforts
24 and thank you, and please consider

1 his support and pass the bill.

2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

4 Thank you for your testimony.

5 Please state your name
6 for the record and proceed with
7 your testimony.

8 MR. STANLEY: Yes.

9 Jonathan Stanley. Madam Chair Bass
10 and the Committee on Rules, thank
11 you for the opportunity to comment
12 on Bill 250989. My name is
13 Jonathan Stanley and I am a member
14 of the Board of the Pennsylvania,
15 Pennsylvania Federation of Dog
16 Clubs. Specifically, I have been
17 the first Vice-Chair of the
18 Legislation Committee for the past
19 six years.

20 I would like to preface
21 my statement by acknowledging the
22 serious and difficult situation
23 that the city and shelters are
24 facing. It certainly would seem

1 and is overwhelming. And although
2 we were encouraged that before the
3 pandemic, perhaps there was a grip
4 getting taken on this. It has
5 gotten worse in the last few years,
6 and this is something that we're
7 seeing across the country because
8 many people adopted dogs during the
9 pandemic without a long-term
10 perspective.

11 But today I am here
12 representing dog clubs and
13 competitors and training groups
14 across the Commonwealth who
15 organize around numerous dog
16 sports, and these include thousands
17 of Pennsylvania citizens who
18 participate in confirmation dog
19 shows, performance sports such as
20 agility, companion events such as
21 obedience and rally, tracking,
22 scent work, herding, lure coursing,
23 coursing ability, tests such as CAT
24 and Fast CAT, hunt tests, field

1 tests, trick dog and basic
2 obedience like the Canine Good
3 Citizen from the AKC.

4 For example, two of our
5 member clubs are the Hatboro Dog
6 Club and the Huntingdon Valley
7 Kennel Club, of which members
8 reside in the city of Philadelphia,
9 and both clubs sent letters to all
10 the Councilmembers concerning this
11 proposed bill. Our organization
12 has internal calculations that
13 estimate the economic impact of dog
14 sports in Pennsylvania at between
15 \$200 million to \$350 million a year
16 in economic stimulus to the
17 Commonwealth.

18 We feel that a broad,
19 sweeping ban on breeding or
20 transfers of any dog under seven
21 months of age would have
22 substantial economic impact, not
23 only on sports as a whole but on
24 individuals who live in

1 Philadelphia and who are hobby
2 professionals. Many of these hobby
3 professionals are likely to be
4 responsibly having a litter or two
5 of puppies in any given year or
6 couple of years. They do this to
7 continue their competitive program
8 and also to provide high caliber
9 dogs to families or individuals who
10 either compete or want a pet with
11 specific traits representing a
12 breed or type of dog.

13 They are not required to
14 be licensed under the Pennsylvania
15 dog law, and I realize that we are
16 speaking a lot about that smaller,
17 unlicensed subset of breeders.
18 Contrary to prevailing opinion,
19 there are many more responsible
20 breeders, in my experience, in
21 circulation than those who are not,
22 while recognizing that there are
23 many who are not.

24 We feel that this broad,

1 sweeping ban of three years to be
2 renewed at the discretion of the
3 City Council would devastate the
4 good and possibly not completely
5 prevent the bad. For example, do
6 we know what percentage of dogs
7 that at any time are held by ACCT
8 Philly or by other shelters were
9 bred outside of the city or perhaps
10 as opposed to those that may have
11 been bred in the city and turned
12 out onto the streets.

13 The Pennsylvania Bureau
14 of Dog Law Enforcement, whom we
15 regularly work with and consult
16 with, inspects 60 licensees,
17 including shelters and rescues in
18 the city of Philadelphia. But
19 people in dog sports who have a
20 litter or two a year are not
21 required under Pennsylvania law to
22 have a kennel license, so it is
23 difficult to nearly impossible, to
24 estimate the number of responsible

1 breeders who would be unfairly and
2 negatively affected by this broad
3 ban.

4 As the Pennsylvania
5 Federation of Dog Clubs, Inc., we
6 have further concerns on the
7 definition of bona fide credentials
8 involving the raising of seeing-eye
9 dogs, therapy dogs and law
10 enforcement dogs, and the potential
11 exists that some won't be supplied
12 to these important works if they
13 cannot be transferred until seven
14 months.

15 While we are supportive
16 of the work that many shelters and
17 rescues perform, they have a
18 different effect on the economy.
19 The Pennsylvania Federation of Dog
20 Clubs is concerned at another broad
21 bill proposing constraints on
22 everyone in the industry, except
23 for rescues and shelters. Now,
24 while this is important work, an

1 adopted dog from a shelter has a
2 greater risk of recidivism back
3 into a shelter than a puppy
4 purchased from a responsible
5 breeder. Most responsible breeders
6 write into their contracts that
7 dogs must be returned to them
8 rather than dropped to a shelter.

9 The Pennsylvania
10 Federation of Dog Clubs
11 respectfully request that the
12 Council consult with responsible
13 breeders and the Pennsylvania
14 Federation of Dog Clubs and other
15 dog owners who come from a
16 perspective of animal welfare
17 rather than animal rights. We
18 believe this bill represents an
19 important need and a good motive,
20 but it does not address the root
21 concerns that cause dogs to be
22 abandoned or turned over to
23 shelters, and we are available to
24 consult constructively on writing

1 legislation that would help address
2 these core issues. Thank you for
3 listening to my comments.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

5 Thank you. Thank you for your
6 testimony. Now, I just wanted to
7 ask one thing really quickly. So
8 you asked in your testimony if ACCT
9 had any idea of the number of
10 breeders that were bred outside the
11 city and then transported in the
12 city and vice versa.

13 And so, I have the same
14 question for you, for your
15 breeders. Do you have any idea of
16 how many breeders who actually
17 followed your rule, in which a dog
18 was bred and then they decided I
19 don't want this puppy anymore, I
20 don't want this dog anymore? How
21 many dogs have actually been
22 returned back to your breeders?

23 MR. STANLEY: It is very
24 uncommon for someone --

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Do
2 you have a number? What is --

3 MR. STANLEY: I do not
4 have a number, no.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
6 Okay. I understand. Thank you
7 very much.

8 MR. STANLEY: Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
10 Thank you for testimony.

11 Do you want to state
12 your name for the record and
13 proceed?

14 MR. HULL: Yep, my name
15 is Charles Hull. I also go by
16 Charlie. So my name is Charlie
17 Hull and I'm here today on behalf
18 of the American Kennel Club, The
19 Kennel Club of Philadelphia and the
20 many responsible dog owners and
21 breeders in the city of
22 Philadelphia. Thank you for this
23 opportunity to speak in opposition
24 to the proposed three-year

1 moratorium on breeding and
2 transferring puppies in
3 Philadelphia.

4 The AKC cares deeply
5 about animal welfare, public safety
6 and strongly supports the goals of
7 stopping neglect, abuse and
8 ill-responsible breeding. However,
9 this bill does not target the real
10 problem. Instead, it applies a
11 broad band where focused
12 enforcement is needed and will
13 create unintended harm for
14 responsible breeders, customers and
15 even dogs themselves. The
16 structure of this bill is
17 inconsistent and difficult to
18 enforce.

19 The bill exempts
20 licensed breeding kennels. But
21 according to supporters,
22 Philadelphia currently has no
23 licensed breeding kennels. This is
24 because responsible hobby breeders

1 simply do not keep or transfer the
2 number of dogs which the state
3 requires for a breeding kennel
4 license, which is 26 dogs either
5 kept or transferred that require a
6 state license.

7 In fact, many only have
8 one planned litter of puppies a
9 year and often have a waiting list
10 of folks wanting to take them once
11 they reach the legal age at which
12 they can be transferred. If
13 responsible breeders are not
14 materially contributing to shelter
15 overcrowding, exempting them would
16 not increase a shelter population,
17 but forcing them into a three-year
18 shutdown can permanently destroy
19 bloodlines, genetic diversity and
20 programs that took decades to
21 build.

22 It should also be noted
23 that these hobbyists raise dogs in
24 their private homes and the

1 inspections and requirements are
2 designed for those producing a
3 larger number of dogs. As a
4 result, it is not reasonable to
5 expect these home-based hobbyists
6 to simply register for a state
7 license, as not all the
8 requirements, for example, size of
9 outdoors areas, would be possible
10 for someone breeding one litter in
11 their home in Philadelphia city
12 limits.

13 Responsible breeders are
14 models for the community. They
15 raise healthy dogs and work to
16 ensure that puppies are placed with
17 appropriate owners, even agreeing
18 to take dogs back if a home does
19 not work out instead of placing
20 them in a shelter. These breeders
21 are in a unique position to support
22 new pet owners and teach them to be
23 responsible dog owners.

24 Breeders have worked for

1 decades to establish quality
2 breeding programs that produce
3 well-bred, healthy dogs. We
4 encourage you to not punish
5 responsible breeders who have been
6 providing quality, well-bred pets
7 to the community for years. ACCT
8 Philly has shared that the shelter
9 intake has increased and that
10 donor-funded DNA testing of about
11 60 Husky-type dogs showed many were
12 closely related. That evidence
13 points to a localized problem,
14 maybe one or two breeders, not a
15 citywide failure of responsible
16 breeders. If specific operations
17 are producing a disproportionate
18 number of shelter dogs, the
19 solution is targeted investigation
20 and enforcement, not shutting down
21 everyone else.

22 ACCT also reports a 45%
23 increase in puppy intake from 2023
24 to 2024, but no data shows how many

1 of those puppies were bred in
2 Philadelphia versus surrender due
3 to housing instability, illness,
4 financial hardship or import
5 activity. Correlation alone is not
6 causation and policy should be
7 based on precise local data.

8 If background breeders
9 are surrendering sick or unsold
10 dogs, they should be cited for
11 abandonment, neglect or consumer
12 fraud under existing law.
13 Pennsylvania already has cruelty
14 statutes, licensing requirements
15 and inspection authority. The
16 problem is not lack of laws. It's
17 lack of targeted enforcement.

18 Moratoriums also push
19 irresponsible breeders and sellers
20 underground. People will not stop
21 wanting dogs because Philadelphia
22 paused breeding and not every
23 person wanting a dog decides that a
24 shelter or rescue dog is right for

1 their family. Instead they will
2 simply go elsewhere. And those
3 breaking current laws and breeding
4 in inhumane manner will continue to
5 do so, resulting in reduced
6 transparency which ultimately harms
7 animal welfare and opens consumers
8 to scams.

9 Again, the AKC strongly
10 supports your goals of lowering
11 shelter population and promoting
12 the humane care of animals.
13 Instead of breeding moratoriums,
14 Philadelphia should instead focus
15 on target investigations based on
16 complaints, penalties for
17 abandonment and neglect, specific
18 actions for bio-education and
19 responsible sterilization programs.

20 Bill 250989 is well-
21 intentioned, but it misapplies ACCT
22 data, punishing responsible
23 breeders and Philadelphia residents
24 seeking a healthy, well-bred dog

1 from a local breeder and risks
2 worsening the very problem it seeks
3 to fix. Thank you for this
4 opportunity to provide my
5 testimony.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

7 Thank you for your testimony. I do
8 want to ask you the same question
9 that I asked the previous
10 gentleman. Can you give us the
11 number of dogs taken back by
12 breeders?

13 MR. HULL: I cannot give
14 you an accurate number, but I
15 will share this with you --

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

17 Okay. That's all. That's --

18 MR. HULL: No, but I
19 will share this with you. When it
20 comes to rescue-type operations, so
21 as a result of also people giving
22 dogs back to breeders, the AKC
23 actually has the largest breed
24 rescue network in the United

1 States. So if I'm a breeder and
2 you've got a Boston Terrier from
3 me, something came up that you may
4 not be able to take the dog, you
5 bring it back to me. I may not be
6 able to take care of your dog, but
7 I have a network, much like a
8 regular rescue network, I have a
9 rescue network where that Boston
10 Terrier instead of going to a
11 shelter will go to a Boston Terrier
12 rescue. So I just wanted to point
13 that out as well.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So
15 how do I know that that is to
16 happen? If you don't have the
17 numbers that you can say in the
18 city of Philadelphia, you know, 100
19 puppies came from breeders through
20 the American Kennel Club. And of
21 those 100 puppies, 20 were returned
22 back to us. You don't have the
23 data.

24 MR. HULL: I don't. And

1 to be quite honest with you, if the
2 breeder is doing the job correctly
3 and educating folks correctly,
4 minus a personal family problem,
5 that should not really very seldom
6 happen.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: If
8 people were responsible all across
9 the board with animals, we wouldn't
10 have this problem. If, if, if.
11 But thank you for your testimony.

12 MR. HULL: And I will
13 not disagree with you because I did
14 hear the word ill-responsible
15 breeder several times. Thanks.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
17 Thank you. One second before you
18 leave.

19 Chair recognizes
20 Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
22 Well, I have a question following
23 that testimony, sort of similar
24 testimony from the various sort of

1 dog clubs. You all testified in
2 opposition and you said that the
3 city should not enforce sort of
4 this blanket ban because it might
5 have unintended consequences. But
6 also, I think all of you referenced
7 the problem that you saw growing
8 during COVID as well.

9 But in your comments, it
10 was about what the city should do
11 and what the city shouldn't do.
12 Obviously, these are resource
13 organizations. You have to be a
14 resource organization to even have
15 a government relations person.
16 What is your responsibility as a
17 private sector being that you also
18 recognize the problem, but you
19 don't want this enforcement? What
20 have you been doing in your
21 industry to curtail this problem?
22 And do you as a private sector also
23 have a responsibility since you
24 voiced that you care about the

1 issue?

2 MR. HULL: So again, as
3 I mentioned AKC does have a breeder
4 network. We have care and
5 conditioning requirements that if
6 you are an AKC breeder, we have a
7 care and conditions policy that
8 must be followed. We do have
9 inspectors who actually go and
10 inspect folks that do a high volume
11 number of dogs, but even smaller
12 hobbyist breeders.

13 We have had situations
14 where we've discovered that a
15 hobbyist breeder has been using --
16 I mean, because they were
17 AKC-registered originally, are
18 advertising that they're selling
19 AKC puppies. But some of those
20 folks have actually been disbarred
21 or barred from doing so. So we try
22 to work with our breeders to make
23 sure that they are acting
24 responsible.

1 To the point where part
2 of the problem we sometimes see as
3 AKC, and some of our breeders, even
4 our smaller hobbyist breeders -- so
5 Councilwoman Bass has been breeding
6 dogs forever just as an --

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: No,
8 no. Mark Squilla.

9 MR. HULL: Just using
10 you as an example.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Mark
12 Squilla was doing it.

13 MR. HULL: As she ages
14 and it becomes more and more
15 difficult, because it's something
16 she's always loved, she suddenly
17 continues to do it and start
18 struggling to take care of dogs and
19 that stuff. So we've been working
20 with -- and I'm very happy to see
21 the group of kids over here as
22 well. We actually have someone
23 that works with a youth program,
24 trying to encourage those folks to

1 step in, help and become that next
2 level.

3 Because a lot of the
4 times, AKC-wise a lot of the
5 problems and issues we sometimes
6 see is someone who's just been
7 breeding for a very long time, and
8 quite frankly you hate to say this,
9 but -- no offense, Councilwoman
10 Bass -- you hate to say this but,
11 Councilwoman Bass, it may be time
12 for you to stop breeding dogs
13 because you simply cannot take care
14 of them.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
16 I mean, all of those sound like
17 reasonable things. But I would put
18 out there that if you all don't
19 want the legislation and the
20 enforcement, you should find ways
21 to incentivize or bring about
22 better behavior in the industry. I
23 don't think it could just be about
24 what you think the city should and

1 should not do if you're an active
2 participant in the industry.

3 MR. HULL: I understand,
4 correct.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And
6 I just want to add to that, that I
7 don't know what kind of
8 relationship you have with ACCT and
9 with PA SPCA. But if you have any
10 resources, any assistance, any way
11 that you all can be helpful,
12 because most of these dogs are not
13 pure-bred dogs. But if you really
14 have members who care about
15 animals, then maybe you could reach
16 out and offer some assistance and
17 try to find some ways that you can
18 be of some service to ACCT and to
19 SPCA to help them with their
20 mission.

21 MR. HULL: And I would
22 agree with you. And in some other
23 states, we have partnered with
24 entities in other areas and that

1 stuff.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: We
3 would love to have it here. Not
4 just in the Commonwealth, but right
5 here in Philadelphia.

6 MR. HULL: Yep, fully
7 understand that.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
9 Great. Thank you so much.

10 MR. HULL: Thank you.
11 Appreciate it.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
13 Thank you for your testimony.

14 And please state your
15 name for the record and proceed
16 with your testimony.

17 MR. RUIZ: Yes. Hello.
18 My name is Hakeem Ruiz. I am a
19 Senior Director at Companions and
20 Animals for Reform and Equity
21 and --

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: For
23 what again? Say it again.

24 MR. RUIZ: Companions

1 and Equity for -- Companions and
2 Animals for Reform and Equity. I
3 apologize.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

5 That's okay.

6 MR. RUIZ: Thank you for
7 the opportunity to testify today.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

9 Sure.

10 MR. RUIZ: I am here on
11 behalf of CARE, Companions and
12 Animals for Reform and Equity. But
13 I more so want to take the
14 opportunity to speak on behalf of
15 myself and some of my community
16 members. In the past couple of
17 years, I've worked with many animal
18 welfare organizations. We've
19 serviced 240 vet bills in the year
20 of 2023.

21 And through that year,
22 we've encountered many different
23 types of pet ownership, not really
24 sourcing where they get these pets

1 from, but just understanding the
2 people. And there's a lot of
3 interesting relationships that they
4 have with the services that the
5 city and state provide, such as the
6 amazing work that is being done at
7 ACCT Philly and SPCA.

8 But unfortunately, there
9 is an issue in the city and across
10 the country at this point and over
11 time with authority. And a lot of
12 people look at these entities as
13 authorities. And when we create a
14 ban like this, it unfortunately
15 will make people a little more
16 hesitant or worried to approach
17 about adoption, fostering, things
18 of that nature.

19 I've heard a lot that
20 goes back to data, and I will be
21 frank. This is something that
22 needs to be addressed. This is
23 something that needs to be worked
24 on. Backyard breeding is a

1 problem. But we take an approach
2 to look at the people that maybe
3 are our citizens, our neighbors,
4 are people that we deal with on the
5 day-to-day, whereas I don't want to
6 go pointing fingers at puppy mills
7 or certain things within the
8 industry that also have problems
9 that aren't regulated.

10 Now, I want to point at
11 the recidivism issues that this
12 kind of can cause, that \$1,000
13 fine. If I'm someone that may not
14 have a full-time employment or
15 maybe have a part-time, I'm taking
16 care of my neighborhood by selling
17 some puppies here and there. Maybe
18 I'm responsible. Maybe I'm not.
19 But if I get that fine for the
20 first time, the first thing I would
21 think to do, I need to make another
22 litter of puppies. I need to find
23 a way to get that money. And
24 that's where the punishment doesn't

1 actually equal out to an
2 opportunity to solve that problem.

3 So I believe partnership
4 is a good way to go about it. And
5 no offense to these amazing
6 organizations that have spoken. I
7 was just taking an opportunity to
8 do some research based on the great
9 work they are doing. And I looked
10 on the websites and I didn't see
11 any opportunities to say, register
12 for that license to become a
13 breeder. I didn't see
14 opportunities of education for the
15 community to see how to become
16 proper breeders, things of that
17 nature.

18 And I'm sure there are
19 people out there that have an
20 interest in animals, such as the
21 Hand to Paw youth and they may not
22 know of programs like that. They
23 may want to get involved. And
24 unfortunately, this kind of puts a

1 worry in approaching a group like
2 ACCT. And when that comes into
3 effect, it just doesn't really help
4 our issue towards clearing
5 shelters, overpopulation. And it
6 puts a little slow-down in the
7 process, and that punishment in the
8 meanwhile is harming our people.

9 Whether or not they go
10 back to doing more breeding, they
11 are going to be affected by that
12 \$1000 or \$2000 fine for something
13 that they may have never been
14 properly educated about. And
15 education goes a long way to make
16 sure that those community members
17 that they're getting the pets from
18 that are going back into these
19 shelters, those people need to be
20 educated too.

21 And a lot of times when
22 you take down a breeder -- I don't
23 want to say take down. But when
24 you enforce the laws upon them and

1 have to stop the operation, some
2 people will say, hey, my family's
3 been going to that breeder for 10,
4 15 years, we have all of our dogs
5 and cats from those breeders. And
6 that just slows down an operation
7 of allowing people the joy and the
8 honor that it is to have pet
9 ownership.

10 And we do need to
11 enforce responsible pet ownership,
12 responsible pet breeding. But it
13 has to start in the form of
14 education, not in the form of
15 punishment. I don't want to talk
16 myself into a corner, but I believe
17 that is all I have to say. Thank
18 you very much for the opportunity
19 to testify.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
21 Well, I want to just say that the
22 joy of owning a pet can still be
23 established through ACCT or through
24 the PA SPCA. So I hear your

1 comments, but it's not as if you
2 will not be able to own a pet.
3 7400 dogs came through ACCT just
4 last year. And I can't remember
5 how many dogs through PA SPCA. But
6 there is plenty of opportunity for
7 pet ownership, for responsible dog
8 ownership here in the city of
9 Philadelphia without backyard
10 breeding. But thank you for your
11 testimony.

12 Please state your name,
13 sir, and proceed with your
14 testimony.

15 MR. STEVENS: Good
16 afternoon, good morning. My name
17 is Reggie Stevens. I am also
18 speaking on behalf of CARE and the
19 families of the community of
20 Philadelphia. Excuse my nerves, by
21 the way. I'm sorry. Like I said
22 good morning, everyone. My name is
23 Reggie Stevens. I'm here on behalf
24 of CARE and the families of

1 Philadelphia.

2 So we all want the same
3 thing, fewer animals and shelters
4 and healthier communities. But in
5 my opinion, the bill will only do
6 the opposite. Punitive laws like
7 this have failed everywhere they've
8 been tried. Fines do not reduce
9 shelter intake. Access to
10 affordable care does. This bill
11 will punish everyday people,
12 working families, low-income
13 residents and first-time pet owners
14 who already struggle.

15 When people are afraid
16 of penalties, they avoid licensing
17 of vet care and shelters. This
18 pushes animals underground and
19 makes the crisis worse. At CARE,
20 we see what works; affordable
21 spayed and neuters, educating the
22 community and trusting community
23 partnerships. These solutions
24 reduce the intake without

1 criminalizing people for -- excuse
2 me.

3 So I'm going to leave
4 you guys with this: You cannot
5 find your way out of a crisis and I
6 hope that you guys never forget
7 that it is expensive being broke.
8 So I want you guys to -- I'm going
9 to leave off with this: Compassion
10 is more effective than enforcement
11 and I appreciate you guys giving me
12 this time. Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

14 That's okay. Thank you for your
15 testimony.

16 Okay. Anyone else here
17 to testify on Bill No. 250989 whose
18 name has not been called?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

21 Seeing none, can we have the Clerk
22 please call the panel for Bill No.
23 251031.

24 THE CLERK: For the

1 record, I can read off the names of
2 the folks that submitted written
3 testimony for 250989 prior to
4 moving on to the next bill. So
5 those names, Erica Mantua,
6 Veterinarian; Cara Brand and
7 Caroline Lipitsky, Co-presidents of
8 Underdogs for Philly; Melissa
9 Resnick, Veterinarian, Humane
10 Veterinary Medical Alliance; Brenda
11 Johnson, ACCT volunteer; Amanda
12 Eldridge, Veterinarian; Emma Niye,
13 ACCT volunteer; Gabriella Patron,
14 Advocate; Emily Nelson,
15 Veterinarian; Halle C. Mitchell,
16 also a Veterinarian; Arlene Quinn,
17 Advocate; Jan Cole, ACCT volunteer;
18 Emily Schreck, ACCT volunteer; and
19 Pinelands Unleash Rescue --
20 Unleashed Rescue, excuse me; Ian
21 Griffith, ACCT volunteer and
22 landlord; Nicole DelaRosa, Street
23 Tails Animal Rescue; Marie A.
24 Marinakis, ACCT volunteer; Dana

1 Peele, former ACCT employee;
2 Melinda Vanvaria, Advocate; Peg
3 Harrity, Advocate; Anne Csink, ACCT
4 volunteer; Barbie Berkowitz,
5 Community Advocate; Dave Gantz,
6 Advocate; Tony Keller; Advocate,
7 Molly Babcock, Advocate; Christina
8 Buckley, Advocate; Ryan Feldman,
9 founder of Uncle Neil's Home, a
10 farm sanctuary. All of those
11 individuals submitted testimony in
12 support of Bill No. 250989.

13 Additional names, Humane
14 World for Animals; Wayne Ferguson
15 from Kennel Club of Philadelphia;
16 Tamir Paulton Mayer from Love Bark
17 Philly; Mark Daley, Community
18 Breeder; James Evans, from CARE in
19 Baltimore, Maryland; Heather
20 Donnelly, a breeder from
21 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and
22 A. Houser from No Place Like Home.
23 Those are all of the names of the
24 individuals that submitted written

1 testimony for Bill No. 250989.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

3 Thank you. And can we have you
4 please call the panel for the next
5 bill, 251031.

6 THE CLERK: For 251031,
7 will Paula Brumbelow Burns,
8 Director of Legislation for the
9 Philadelphia City Planning
10 Commission, please approach the
11 witness table.

12 (Witness approached
13 witness table.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
15 morning.

16 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS:
17 Good morning. It's still morning.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
19 Please state your name for the
20 record and proceed.

21 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS:
22 I'm Paula Brumbelow Burns, Director
23 of Legislation for the Philadelphia
24 City Planning Commission. I'm here

1 to testify on Bill No. 251031.
2 Introduced into City Council on
3 November 20, 2025, by Councilmember
4 Bass on behalf of Council President
5 Johnson.

6 Bill No. 251031 amends
7 the Philadelphia Zoning Code and
8 Map by repealing Bill No. 241055,
9 which created the /PAK Packer
10 Avenue Overlay District, and
11 changing the zoning maps in the
12 Stadium area of the Lower South
13 Planning District. The area
14 impacted by this bill is bounded by
15 Packer Avenue, Seventh Street,
16 Pattison Avenue and Darien Street,
17 and will return the zoning from
18 CMX-3, Commercial Mixed-Use to I-2
19 Medium Industrial, and remove the
20 zoning overlay that allowed for
21 additional uses and changes to
22 parking requirements in the same
23 area.

24 Repealing Bill 241055

1 will align more closely with the
2 Lower South District Plan's goals
3 for the western section of the port
4 area. The Philadelphia City
5 Planning Commission considered Bill
6 No. 251031 at its public meeting on
7 December 4, 2025 and recommended
8 the bill for approval. I will be
9 happy to answer any questions at
10 this time.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: No
12 questions from the committee?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: No,
15 okay. All right. Thank you for
16 your testimony.

17 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS:
18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is
20 there anyone else here to testify
21 on Bill No. 251031 whose name has
22 not been called?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

1 Okay. Hearing none, I want to
2 thank the witness for her
3 testimony. And I want to again
4 state for the record that Bill No.
5 251101 is being held by the
6 sponsor, so there's no testimony on
7 that bill.

8 Being that there are no
9 further witnesses, we'll now
10 proceed with taking public comment.

11 Is there anyone else
12 here in the chambers that wishes to
13 testify before the committee today?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

16 Okay. Seeing none, we will now go
17 into our -- that will conclude the
18 public hearing and we'll now go
19 into a public meeting shortly to
20 consider the action to be taken on
21 the bills before this committee
22 today.

23 Okay. Madam Clerk, can
24 we have you please call the roll.

1 THE CLERK: Chairmember

2 Bass.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

4 Present.

5 THE CLERK: Vice-

6 Chairmember Squilla.

7 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

8 Present.

9 THE CLERK: Member

10 Gauthier.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

12 Present.

13 THE CLERK: Member

14 Jones.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES:

16 Present.

17 THE CLERK: Member

18 Gilmore Richardson.

19 (No response.)

20 THE CLERK: Member

21 Thomas.

22 (No response.)

23 THE CLERK: Member

24 O'Neill.

1 (No response.)

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

3 Thank you. I note for the record
4 that a quorum of the committee is
5 present.

6 The Chair now recognizes
7 Councilmember Squilla for a motion
8 on the amendment to Bill No.
9 250917.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

11 Thank you, Madam Chair.

12 I offer an amendment to
13 Bill No. 250917. A copy of the
14 amendment has been circulated to
15 all members of the committee. I
16 move that the amendment to Bill No.
17 250917 be adopted.

18 (Duly seconded.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

20 Thank you. It's been moved and
21 properly seconded by both
22 Councilmembers Jones and Gauthier
23 that the amendment to Bill No.
24 250917 be adopted.

1 All of those in favor of
2 this motion will signify by saying
3 aye.

4 (Aye.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is
6 there anyone opposed?

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
9 Okay. The ayes have it. The
10 motion carries and the amendment to
11 Bill No. 250917 has been adopted.

12 Chair recognizes
13 Councilmember Squilla for a motion
14 on the amendment to Bill No.
15 250989.

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
17 Thank you, Madam Chair.

18 I offer an amendment to
19 Bill No. 250989. A copy of the
20 amendment has been circulated to
21 all members of the committee. I
22 move that the amendment to Bill No.
23 250989 be adopted.

24 (Duly seconded.)

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

2 Thank you. It's been moved and
3 properly seconded that the
4 amendment to Bill No. 250989 be
5 adopted.

6 All those in favor of
7 the motion will signify by saying
8 aye.

9 (Aye.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

11 Anyone opposed?

12 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

13 Aye.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

15 Okay. I'm going to do it again.
16 All those in favor of the motion
17 will signify by saying aye.

18 (Aye.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

20 Anyone opposed?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

23 Okay. The ayes have it. The
24 motion carries and the amendment to

1 Bill No. 250989 has been adopted.

2 Chair now recognizes
3 Councilmember Squilla for a motion
4 on Bill No. 250988.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

6 Thank you, Madam Chair.

7 I move that Bill No.
8 250988 be reported from this
9 committee with a favorable
10 recommendation to further move that
11 the rules of Council be suspended
12 as to permit the first reading of
13 this bill at the next session of
14 Council.

15 (Duly seconded.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

17 Thank you. It's been moved and
18 properly seconded, the amendment to
19 Bill No. 250 --

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

21 (Inaudible).

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I'm
24 sorry. For the record, thank you,

1 Madam Chair. I'm -- I offer an
2 amendment to Bill No. 250988. A
3 copy of the amendment has been
4 circulated to all members of the
5 committee. I move that the
6 amendment to Bill No. 25098 be
7 adopted.

8 (Duly seconded.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

10 Thank you. It's been moved and
11 properly seconded that the
12 amendment to Bill No. 250988 be
13 adopted.

14 All those in favor of
15 the motion will signify by saying
16 aye.

17 (Aye.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

19 Anyone opposed?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
22 ayes have it and the motion
23 carries. And the amendment to Bill
24 No. 250988 has been adopted as

1 well.

2 The Chair now recognizes
3 Councilmember Squilla for a motion
4 on Bill Nos. 250917 as amended,
5 250988 as amended, 250989 as
6 amended, 251031 and 25 -- period,
7 251031.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

9 Thank you, Madam Chair.

10 I move that Bill Nos.
11 250917 as amended, 250988 as
12 amended, 250989 as amended, and
13 251031 be reported from this
14 committee with a favorable
15 recommendation and further move
16 that the rules of Council be
17 suspended as to permit the first
18 reading of this bill at the next
19 session of Council.

20 (Duly seconded.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It
22 has been moved and properly
23 seconded that Bill Nos. 250917 as
24 amended, 250988 as amended, 250989

1 as amended, and 251031 be reported
2 from this committee with a
3 favorable recommendation and
4 further move that the rules of
5 Council be suspended to permit
6 first reading of the bills at the
7 next session of Council.

8 All those in favor of
9 the motion will signify by saying
10 aye.

11 (Aye.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is
13 there anyone opposed?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
16 ayes have it and the motion
17 carries. And this concludes the
18 business of this committee. Thank
19 you all for your attendance.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank
23 you, Madam Chair.

24 (Committee on Rules

1 concluded at 12:00 p.m.)

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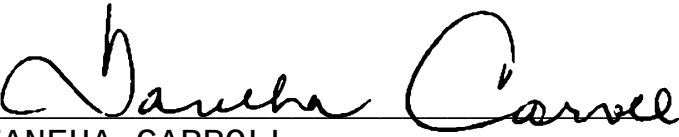
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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence noted are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me in the foregoing matter, and that this is a correct transcript of the same.


TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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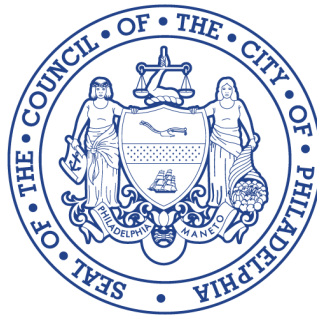
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City of Philadelphia

*City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107*



Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

10:00 AM

Room 400, City Hall

Committee on Rules

- [250917](#) An Ordinance Amending Section 14-529 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “/VDO, Fifth District Overlay District,” to provide for building requirements to prevent vacant lots, all under certain terms and conditions.
- [250988](#) An Ordinance Amending Chapter 9-600 of The Philadelphia Code (entitled “Service and Other Businesses”) to add business hour restrictions in the Fifth Councilmanic District; and amending Section 14-529 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “/VDO, Fifth District Overlay District,” to restrict certain commercial uses and make other related changes, all under certain terms and conditions
- [250989](#) An Ordinance Amending Title 10 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “Regulation of Individual Conduct and Activity,” by adding a new Section to impose a temporary moratorium on the breeding and transfer of puppies, all under certain terms and conditions.
- [251031](#) An Ordinance Repealing in its entirety Bill No. 241055 (approved December 23, 2024), entitled “An ordinance to amend the Philadelphia Zoning Maps by changing the zoning designations of certain areas of land located within an area bounded by Packer Avenue, Seventh Street, Pattison Avenue, and Darien Street. To amend Title 14 of The Philadelphia Code by adding Section 14-541 entitled “/PAK, Packer Avenue Overlay District and making other related changes, all under certain terms and conditions.”
- [251101](#) An Ordinance Amending Chapter 14-500 (“Overlay Zoning Districts”) of The Philadelphia Code to add a new section establishing the “Vine Street Expressway District,” all under certain terms and conditions.



COMMITTEE ON RULES

Witness List

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Bill No. 250917

- Panel 1: Administration
 - o Paula Brumbelow Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
- Panel 2:
 - o Kenn Penn from the Building Industry Association

Bill No. 250988

- Panel 1: Administration
 - o Paula Brumbelow Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Bill No. 250989

- Panel 1: Administration
 - o Sarah Barnett, Executive Director, ACCT Philly
- Panel 2:
 - o Julie Klim, CEO of PSPCA
 - o Penny Ellison, Adjunct Professor of Animal Law and Ethics at University of Pennsylvania, Retired mediator United States Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit, and Founder of Hand2Paw

Bill No. 251031

- Panel 1: Administration
 - o Paula Brumbelow Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Bill No. 251101

- Panel 1: Administration
 - o Paula Brumbelow Burns, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
- Panel 2:
 - o Brian Gilbert, Philadelphia Plumbers Local 690 Training Coordinator, Master Plumber
 - o Paul Prendergast, Staff Attorney, Eastern Atlantic States Carpenters

PUBLIC COMMENT

- [250917](#) An Ordinance Amending Section 14-529 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “/VDO, Fifth District Overlay District,” to provide for building requirements to prevent vacant lots, all under certain terms and conditions.
- [250988](#) An Ordinance Amending Chapter 9-600 of The Philadelphia Code (entitled “Service and Other Businesses”) to add business hour restrictions in the Fifth Councilmanic District; and amending Section 14-529 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “/VDO, Fifth District Overlay District,” to restrict certain commercial uses and make other related changes, all under certain terms and conditions
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- [251101](#) An Ordinance Amending Chapter 14-500 (“Overlay Zoning Districts”) of The Philadelphia Code to add a new section establishing the “Vine Street Expressway District,” all under certain terms and conditions.

TESTIMONY OF

PAULA BRUMBELOW BURNS
PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON RULES
HON. CINDY BASS, CHAIR

ON BILL NUMBER 250917

February 3, 2026

Good morning Chairperson Bass and members of the Rules Committee. I am Paula Brumbelow Burns, Director of Legislation for the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. I am here to testify on Bill Number 250917, introduced into City Council on October 23, 2025, by Councilmember Young.

Bill No. 250917 amends the Philadelphia Zoning Code by Amending Section 14-529 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “/VDO, Fifth District Overlay District,” to provide for building requirements to prevent vacant lots within the Council District.

This Bill will require an applicant to obtain a building permit to change or expand a principal structure, or to build a new structure, before the Department of Licenses and Inspections can issue a zoning demolition permit and a building demolition permit.

The Council office worked with Planning Commission staff on changes to the language, ensuring that renovations of existing buildings were not included in its provisions.

The Philadelphia City Planning Commission considered Bill No. 250917 at its public meeting on November 20, 2025 and recommended the Bill for approval.

I will be happy to answer any questions at this time.



BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
of Philadelphia

Testimony on Bill No. 250917
City Council Rules Committee
February 3, 2026

My name is Kenn Penn, and I am testifying today on behalf of the Building Industry Association of Philadelphia (BIA). The BIA is a trade association of small, medium, and large residential developers working throughout Philadelphia. I want to thank Chair Bass and the rest of the committee for allowing the BIA to provide testimony today on Bill No. 250917. Council Member Young's legislation prohibits demolition prior to issuance of a building permit in his district and raises several significant concerns.

First, the bill would eliminate a common and practical approach used by developers who seek to begin lawful demolition while a building permit is still under review. Under the bill, this pathway would be arrested except in cases where a structure is deemed "imminently dangerous." This creates a narrow and difficult standard that will unnecessarily delay many projects that are otherwise proceeding in good faith.

Second, the prohibition would effectively add months to project timelines, forcing owners and developers to carry additional holding costs, insurance, security, and financing expenses before any meaningful work can begin. These delays will increase overall project costs and could discourage redevelopment of blighted or deteriorated properties in the Fifth District.

Third, to qualify for an exception based on structural danger, certain property owners may be compelled to intentionally incur a code violation or enforcement action to demonstrate instability, which is obviously an inefficient and counterproductive process that incentivizes the very conditions the City seeks to avoid.

Most troubling, the bill would prevent demolition of vacant and unsecured structures that are highly susceptible to unlawful occupation. Philadelphia has already experienced multiple fires this winter, many historically linked to squatting in abandoned buildings. By barring timely demolition, the legislation may inadvertently increase public safety risks for neighboring residents, first responders, and surrounding properties.

Councilmember Young has indicated that he prefers a vacant, dilapidated structure to remain standing, even when attached to another building, rather than creating a vacant lot that could attract illegal dumping. While this perspective reflects a legitimate urban-planning concern, it overlooks the immediate fire, safety, and liability risks posed by unstable, unsecured buildings.

Although our organization did not oppose the Councilmember's recent insurance legislation, this proposed ban on demolition prior to permit issuance is dangerous policy. In our view, it exposes the City to potential legal liability in cases where property owners can demonstrate that a structure was difficult or impossible to secure and posed a foreseeable risk.

The BIA asks that the Council Member consider limiting this legislation to only those properties that the owner and L&I have not certified and prepared as vacant through a vacant property license issued by L&I. Thank you for your consideration.

TESTIMONY OF

PAULA BRUMBELOW BURNS
PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON RULES
HON. CINDY BASS, CHAIR

ON BILL NUMBER 250988

February 3, 2026

Good morning, Chairperson Bass and members of the Rules Committee. I am Paula Brumbelow Burns, Director of Legislation for the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. I am here to testify to Bill Number 250988, introduced into City Council on November 13, 2025, by Councilmember Young.

Bill No. 250988 amends Chapter 9-600 of The Philadelphia Code (entitled "Service and Other Businesses") to add business hour restrictions in the Fifth Councilmanic District; and amending Section 14-529 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "/VDO, Fifth District Overlay District," to restrict certain commercial uses and make other related changes, in the Fairmount neighborhood of the Lower North Planning District.

This Bill will require applicants in two specific areas of the Fifth Councilmanic District to obtain a special exception for Sundries, Pharmaceutical, and Convenience Sales, a use category currently allowed by right. This change would apply to two commercial corridors: Girard Avenue from College Avenue to 24th Street and Fairmount Avenue from Broad Street to 24th Street. The Planning Commission staff recommended further defining the concerns and developing solutions to address them.

The Philadelphia City Planning Commission considered Bill No. 250988 at its public meeting on December 4, 2025 and recommended the bill for approval with proviso.

I will be happy to answer any questions at this time.

Testimony before Philadelphia City Council

Sarah Barnett, Executive Director, Animal Care & Control Team of Philly

(ACCT Philly)

City Council Committee on Rules

Bill No. 250989

February 3, 2026

Good morning, Chairperson Bass, Vice Chairman Squilla and City Council Rules Committee members. My name is Sarah Barnett and I am here on behalf of ACCT Philly, the city's only open-intake animal shelter. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Bill 250989, legislation that establishes a temporary breeding moratorium for dogs in the City of Philadelphia. Specifically, the temporary moratorium is for thirty-six (36) months from the effective date of the bill which is sixty (60) days after the bill becomes law.

Since 2012, ACCT Philly has provided animal control services to the city, and since its inception that year, ACCT Philly has taken into its facility over 291,000 animals. As an open-intake shelter, we are legally and ethically required to accept every animal that comes through our doors, stray or surrendered, healthy or sick, young or old, from every neighborhood in Philadelphia.

Last year alone, more than 20,000 animals entered ACCT Philly, making us one of the largest single-site animal shelters in the country. We are the city's triage facility for animals, and the need for our services has never been greater.

Prior to the pandemic, ACCT's intake was slowly falling, but since the pandemic we have seen a dramatic and sustained increase in dog intake, growing by nearly 1,000 additional dogs per year. In 2025, over 7,400 dogs entered the shelter. Today, an average of 22 dogs enter our shelter every single day, and we expect in 2026 we'll take in over 8,000 dogs. This has forced us into a constant state of reaction and triage, where staff, volunteers and rescue partners are doing everything possible to try to save lives and meet the needs of the community.

One of the first questions I am asked when people hear our intake numbers is: *Why is this happening?* There are many factors, but irresponsible and unregulated backyard breeding is a major driver of this increase.

We see the impact firsthand. We see puppies surrendered because they are "too big to sell now." We see mother dogs who have been bred repeatedly, only to be abandoned once

their bodies give out—many suffering from preventable medical conditions caused by repeated breeding. We see puppies arriving sick with parvovirus, a highly contagious and often deadly disease that is preventable through basic vaccines. We see dogs purchased as puppies from breeders with significant behavioral issues that make them unsafe.

This problem doesn't just impact the shelter system, it impacts public health, public safety, and quality of life in our neighborhoods. Parvovirus is a virus that lives in the environment for up to 6 months, infecting other dogs in the community who aren't fully vaccinated. I've watched an owner stand with his 5-year-old dog while the dog died, a dog who never left the house and yard. His owner got him one vaccine but didn't know dogs must have two to be protected. He unknowingly brought the virus into the home. And we see families who unknowingly purchased a puppy who becomes gravely ill within days, facing thousands of dollars in medical bills and devastating emotional consequences forcing them to surrender a dog, with the dog then taking up limited shelter resources.

For years, free and low cost spay and neuter services have been offered, and they are critically important—but they are not enough on their own. The scale of breeding is increasingly outpacing the system's ability to respond and producing simply too many dogs for Philadelphia adopters to absorb. While this is happening in communities around the country, we're fortunate because thanks to Councilwoman Bass, we have an opportunity to do something about it.

ACCT Philly has faced challenges over the years, and we have made meaningful progress. Passing this common sense, practical bill empowers us to take a preventive, rather than purely reactive, approach to one of the biggest drivers of dog overpopulation in our city – unlicensed breeders. It allows us to focus on a major cause of overpopulation in our shelter. It allows us to focus on lifesaving, community support, and responsible pet ownership—rather than constantly chasing the next crisis.

This is a temporary, targeted solution to a real and growing problem, and it gives us one more essential tool to protect animals, support residents, and strengthen our community as a whole.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Testimony of Julie S. Klim, Chief Executive Officer, Pennsylvania SPCA

Bill No. 250989

Before Philadelphia City Council, Committee on Rules, Hon. City Bass, Chair

February 3, 2026

Good morning, Committee Members. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Julie Klim, and I have been the CEO of the Pennsylvania SPCA (PSPCA) for almost ten years.

The PSPCA's Philadelphia Headquarters, located in the Juniata Park section of the city, is the organization's largest site. **We are currently caring for 291 animals in Philadelphia, including 193 dogs.** Throughout 2025, we routinely operated above capacity, at one point having 250 dogs in our care.

Our Philadelphia shelter houses our Shelter Hospital, which treats medical emergencies for thousands of homeless pets each year, including the growing number of puppies with parvovirus, a highly infectious and fatal disease if left untreated, that enter the Philadelphia animal shelter ecosystem each year.

Our Animal Law Enforcement (ALE) team is comprised of eight sworn officers who uphold Pennsylvania's animal cruelty laws in eighteen Pennsylvania Counties. **Four of these officers are dedicated solely to Philadelphia, and in 2025, they investigated 2,744 animal cruelty complaints, 58% of the PSPCA's total investigations.**

Lastly, our Erie Avenue location houses a Public Veterinary Clinic and Surgery, which provides low-cost vet care to our community six days per week. Our Community Outreach programs provide free vet care and pet food out in the field to Southwest and North Philadelphia communities without access to our Erie Avenue clinic due to transportation issues. **In 2025, our low-cost and free services supported 31,764 Philadelphia pets.**

I provide this background information to paint a picture of the scope of our operations in all corners of Philadelphia. Our location in close proximity to ACCT Philly means that thousands of pets that would otherwise end up in the city-funded shelter are instead taken into the PSPCA's care. I am here today in support of Bill 250989 because, in recent years, we have seen an explosion in the number of puppies entering the shelter system from unlicensed breeding, and these cases have a disproportionately large impact on our operations due to their high cost of care.

Take the following case as an example, in early 2023, a Philadelphia resident decided to breed Cane Corso's a large breed dog already overrepresented in the shelter system. He took the then eight-week-old puppies to a private citizen to have their ears cropped, a purely cosmetic

procedure. Ear cropping can only legally be performed by a licensed Veterinarian. The procedure resulted in severe infections for the puppies, two of whom were taken to a local emergency hospital. The breeder later abandoned the puppies at the hospital after learning of the cost of their care; the PSPCA's ALE Officers were called by the Veterinarian, who knew that there were additional puppies in the home. The person who performed the ear cropping procedure later pleaded guilty to animal cruelty charges.

We seized a total of eight puppies, including the two abandoned at the Emergency Hospital. The breeder fought us in court for custody of the pups, not wanting to lose his investment and hoping to continue his breeding program. After eight months and tens of thousands of dollars in medical expenses and care, the dogs were released into our custody. But this was not the end of their journey; the puppies had not been socialized properly and required many more months of behavioral intervention. The last dog from this group was adopted in March 2025, a full two years after they first came into our care.

This is but one case, but sadly not isolated. In recent months, we have taken in puppies abandoned in a Philadelphia parking garage, another group of puppies left at our Erie Ave location, all of whom later tested positive for parvovirus, with one needing emergency surgery on an injured leg. And another group only a few weeks ago. The cases are endless.

In our experience, people often get into breeding puppies thinking it will be simple, and then the puppies that didn't sell or had medical expenses that exceed any potential profit end up in the shelter system. Or, as the cute eight-week-old puppies grow, their value decreases further, and the puppies, now with behavior issues end up surrendered, further taxing the system.

But unlicensed breeding does not only impact shelters, the risk to our community at large is also important. **Eighty-four percent of the parvovirus tests performed in our public vet clinic came back positive in 2025.** That means puppies, owned by members of the community, were exposed to this deadly disease. A virus that lives on the ground for months – exposing all community pets. We are seeing increased numbers of adult dogs suffering from parvovirus in our shelter, something that was previously less common.

Prior to the COVID pandemic, Philadelphia's animal population issues were improving, but those trends have sadly gone in the other direction. We believe this moratorium, combined with spay/neuter services to be provided by the Philadelphia community, can have a meaningful impact on our dog overpopulation, and end unnecessary suffering. The PSPCA touched the lives of over 36,200 Philadelphia animals in 2025, and yet receives no funding from the city. The resources devoted to unlicensed breeding is simply unsustainable.

Importantly, resources currently devoted to managing the impact of unlicensed breeding can be reallocated to providing additional veterinary and pet food support to our communities in need. Our Philadelphia community is suffering, every day we receive pleas from loving families, needing to surrender their pets because they cannot afford to keep them. The more resources we can devote to these families in need, the more we can keep pets where they belong – with their families.

Thank you for your time today. I am happy to answer any questions.

TESTIMONY OF PENNY C. ELLISON

**ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA CAREY LAW
SCHOOL**

ON BILL NO. 250989

BEFORE PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL, COMMITTEE ON RULES

HON. CINDY BASS, CHAIR

FEBRUARY 3, 2026

Good morning, Chairperson and members of the Committee.

My name is Penny Ellison. I teach animal law at the University of Pennsylvania, where I have taught for approximately twenty years. Since 2015, I have also served on the Dog Law Advisory Board for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture as well as on the Board of the Pennsylvania SPCA. I am here today to speak to the legal framework and authority underlying this proposed moratorium.

At the outset, I want to be clear about what this ordinance represents from a legal perspective. A temporary moratorium on unlicensed dog breeding and sales of puppies represents an ordinary exercise of municipal police power. Regulation of animals — particularly where public health, consumer protection, animal welfare and municipal services are implicated — has long been recognized as a core local government function. Cities routinely regulate the breeding, sale, transfer, and advertising of animals, especially where unregulated activity imposes documented costs on public agencies and creates health and safety risks.

Temporary moratoria are also a familiar municipal tool. They are commonly used where existing enforcement mechanisms have proven insufficient, where conditions have reached an acute level, and where legislative bodies need time to stabilize a situation while longer-term regulatory solutions are considered. Courts consistently uphold moratoria when they are limited in duration, targeted in scope, and substantially related to legitimate public purposes. This ordinance fits squarely within that framework.

It is also important to emphasize that this legislation does not operate in isolation or attempt to supplant state law. To the contrary, it is expressly designed to function in harmony with Pennsylvania Dog Law. Dog Law establishes a statewide licensing and inspection framework for kennels and breeders. This ordinance does not create a competing licensing system, or regulate conduct already covered by state licensure. Instead, it applies only to those operating outside that existing framework — namely, unlicensed breeding and unregulated puppy sales that have produced documented local impacts in Philadelphia.

Importantly, this ordinance does not ban dog breeding. It preserves a clear and lawful pathway for responsible breeders to continue operating, while temporarily pausing unlicensed activity that has contributed to the current strain on City resources. The moratorium affects only unlicensed breeding and any breeder or kennel of any size can apply for and get a state license. For breeders housing fewer than fifty dogs per year, the annual fee is modest — currently one hundred dollars. The ordinance relies on this existing, objective state framework as the dividing line for exemption, rather than attempting to draw subjective distinctions based on intent, scale, or self-characterization.

That approach is legally sound and enforceable. Conditioning exemption on licensure is a common regulatory technique because it provides clarity, traceability, inspection authority, and consumer protection, while avoiding the need for the City to investigate motive or make case-by-case determinations.

In my professional judgment, this ordinance represents a careful and defensible use of municipal authority. It aligns with state law, relies on objective standards, and addresses a documented local problem using tools that courts have long recognized as appropriate for cities to use. For those reasons, I believe Council can feel comfortable that this legislation rests on solid legal footing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.

TESTIMONY OF

PAULA BRUMBELOW BURNS
PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON RULES
HON. CINDY BASS, CHAIR

ON BILL NUMBER 2501031

February 3, 2026

Good morning, Chairperson Bass and members of the Rules Committee. I am Paula Brumbelow Burns, Director of Legislation for the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. I am here to testify on Bill Number 251031, introduced into City Council on November 20, 2025, by Councilmember Bass on behalf of Council President Johnson.

Bill No. 251031 amends the Philadelphia Zoning Code and Map by repealing Bill 241055, which created the /PAK Packer Avenue Overlay District, and changing the zoning maps in the Stadium area of the Lower South Planning District.

The area impacted by this Bill is bounded by Packer Avenue, Seventh Street, Pattison Avenue, and Darien Street, and will return the zoning from CMX-3, Commercial Mixed-Use to I-2 Medium Industrial, and remove the zoning overlay that allowed for additional uses and changes to parking requirements in the same area.

Repealing Bill 241055 will align more closely with the Lower South District Plan's goals for the western section of the port area.

The Philadelphia City Planning Commission considered Bill No. 251031 at its public meeting on December 4, 2025, and recommended the bill for approval.

I will be happy to answer any questions at this time.

TESTIMONY OF

PAULA BRUMBELOW BURNS
PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON RULES
HON. CINDY BASS, CHAIR

ON BILL NUMBER 251011

February 3, 2026

Good morning, Chairperson Bass and members of the Rules Committee. I am Paula Brumbelow Burns, Director of Legislation for the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. I am here to testify on Bill Number 251011, introduced into City Council on December 11, 2025, by Councilmember Young.

Bill No. 251011 amends the Philadelphia Zoning Code by amending Chapter 14-500 Overlay Zoning Districts by establishing the Vine Street Expressway in the Logan Square neighborhood of the Central Planning District.

This Bill proposes to create a new zoning overlay entitled /VSO, Vine Street Expressway Overlay District. This overlay will prohibit new residential uses within the area bounded by Callowhill Street, Broad Street, Race Street, and 16th Street. The largest land uses are the former Hahnemann Hospital buildings and a large parking garage.

This Bill conflicts with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the goals of the H.O.M.E. plan to support residential development.

The Philadelphia City Planning Commission considered Bill No. 251011 at its public meeting on January 15, 2026, and recommended the Bill for approval, not for approval, or for approval with proviso. We would respectfully request that this bill be held in Committee.

I will be happy to answer any questions at this time.

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Erica Matula, VMD DACVECC
1341 S 18th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146

EricaMatula@gmail.com

January 27, 2026

To: City Council Committee

A Philadelphia Veterinarian's Perspective on Bill 250989

I am writing in full support of Bill 250989 and respectfully urge the committee to advance this legislation.

As a veterinarian practicing emergency and critical care medicine in Philadelphia, I am frequently involved at the point where preventable problems become medical crises. A significant number of animals I treat originate from unregulated backyard breeding, where neither the breeder nor the purchaser has adequate understanding of animal health, development, or basic care. These cases are not the result of rare mishaps—they are the predictable outcome of a system that allows animals to be sold without standards, education, or accountability.

Equally concerning is the lack of preparation among many individuals who purchase these animals. Owners often have no prior experience with pets, no guidance on routine veterinary care, and little understanding of what is normal versus dangerous in an animal. Subtle but critical warning signs—such as lethargy, decreased appetite, abnormal breathing, or gastrointestinal illness—frequently go unrecognized until the animal is gravely ill. This gap in knowledge is not malicious; it is the result of animals being sold without education, counseling, or support, leaving both the pet and owner vulnerable to preventable suffering.

Animals produced through irresponsible breeding are disproportionately represented in emergency and critical care settings. Many arrive with advanced infectious disease, congenital defects, malnutrition, or untreated trauma. By the time medical care is sought, the level of intervention required is extensive, costly, and often unsuccessful. In some cases, humane euthanasia becomes the only option due to irreversible disease—an outcome that is devastating for families who never anticipated this level of complexity or responsibility.

The downstream impact is felt acutely by ACCT Philly, the city's only open-intake shelter. When owners become overwhelmed—financially, emotionally, or medically—these animals are frequently surrendered. The shelter is then tasked with managing animals that are medically fragile, behaviorally underdeveloped, or both, further straining limited space, staffing, and medical resources. This constant influx undermines the shelter's ability to focus on rehabilitation, adoption, and community-based prevention efforts.

Beyond the logistical and medical consequences lies an ethical responsibility. Animals bred without standards or protection have no ability to advocate for themselves. Those already born—and those yet to be born from inadequate breeding practices—depend entirely on professionals, policymakers, and the community to act in their best interest. It is our responsibility to speak on behalf of these animals and to prevent predictable suffering before it occurs.

Bill 250989 provides a necessary opportunity to interrupt this cycle. A temporary ban on backyard breeding allows the city to reduce preventable harm, protect inexperienced owners, and begin restoring balance to an overwhelmed animal welfare system. This legislation prioritizes prevention, accountability, and humane treatment.

As a Philadelphia resident, veterinarian, and advocate for animal welfare and public health, I strongly urge your support of Bill 250989. This bill represents a meaningful step toward fulfilling our obligation to protect vulnerable animals and the community as a whole.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to the health and welfare of our city.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matula', written in a cursive style.

Erica Matula, VMD DACVECC

Written comment on Bill No. 250989

From Philly Underdogs <underdogsofphilly@gmail.com>

Date Thu 1/29/2026 10:47 PM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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To the Committee on Rules:

We are submitting a written comment on Bill No. 250989 before the Committee on Rules on behalf of Underdogs of Philly: The Outside Dog Initiative. **We write in strong support of Bill No. 250989**, which proposes a temporary moratorium on the unregulated breeding and transfer of puppies in Philadelphia. We respectfully urge the Committee to support this bill and advance it as written.

Our organization witnesses Philadelphia's dog overpopulation crisis from a unique, ground-level perspective. In Philadelphia, it is legal to keep dogs outdoors if they are provided what the law defines as "adequate shelter." Many people find this reality difficult to accept. Indeed, there is a significant gap between what the law requires and what most of us would consider humane or ideal conditions for a dog. Our organization exists to help bridge that gap. We provide insulated dog houses, kennels to get dogs off chains, and basic wellness care. This work requires patience and a willingness to accept a difficult reality: even with support, many dogs assisted by our organization will live outdoors for their entire lives, often in concrete backyards with limited interaction or enrichment.

We are frequently asked, "Why do people have dogs if they keep them outdoors?" The answer is complex, but it often reflects the downstream consequences of unregulated and indiscriminate breeding. In many cases, dogs we encounter entered their homes as a puppy through a family member's accidental litter or a local neighborhood breeder. Puppies are appealing; however, without proper training, adequate resources, or long-term planning, they can quickly grow into adult dogs and become an overwhelming responsibility. Many owners we encounter are also facing significant challenges, including health issues, unstable income, and lack of transportation. Too often, owners respond to these compounding pressures by moving dogs outdoors. At other times, when dogs become more work than expected – when medical issues arise or when the financial burden becomes too great – we are frequently contacted to help with rehoming. Most of these dogs will enter an already overwhelmed shelter system, where outcomes are increasingly uncertain due to severe overcrowding.

Through our community outreach, we know that many dog owners do not have bad intentions. Instead, they lack access to accurate information, resources, and long-term support. We see this most clearly when we offer spay and neuter services. Our organization covers all associated costs, including transportation and a week of medical boarding during recovery. Despite removing these financial and logistical barriers, we still frequently encounter resistance. Common reasons cited include:

"The dog is too young."

"I want them to have a family of their own."

"They have such a good temperament—they should have puppies."

Simply put, the belief that having puppies is simply what dogs are meant to do is deeply ingrained, often passed down through families or learned early in life. However, **our organization sees the direct, and preventable, consequences of continued breeding and the failure to spay or neuter dogs.**

This is the reality of Philadelphia's dog overpopulation crisis: it is shaped by both unregulated breeding and human hardship. Addressing one without acknowledging the other limits the ability to create lasting change in animal welfare and underscores the need for upstream, preventive policies. **By curbing indiscriminate breeding, Bill No. 250989 helps prevent the daily pressures facing many Philadelphia residents from resulting in irreversible outcomes for dogs.**

We strongly support the temporary moratorium on the breeding and transfer of puppies as a means of giving Council and stakeholders time to develop permanent, humane regulatory solutions. Moreover, it would provide essential clarity and support in our conversations with dog owners. Being able to state plainly that unregulated breeding is illegal in Philadelphia gives both outreach workers and residents clearer guidance. From the perspective of our organization, limiting unregulated breeding is not abstract policy; it is a direct intervention that prevents suffering before it begins.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your continued commitment to the welfare of Philadelphia's animals and communities.

Cara Brand (District 2 resident) & Caroline Lipinski (District 5 resident)
Co-Presidents of Underdogs of Philly: The Outside Dog Initiative

Public comment for Bill 250989 from a shelter veterinarian

From Melissa Resnick <melissa.resnick@gmail.com>

Date Mon 2/2/2026 8:12 AM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

 1 attachment (45 KB)

Bill 250989 veterinarian comment M.Resnick.pdf;

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear Committee Clerk,

Please find my public comment below, and also attached as a pdf.

Melissa Resnick, DVM, MPH
Pennsylvania State Representative, Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance
329 S.25th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
melissa.resnick@gmail.com
215-459-1653

February 2, 2026

Dear Councilmembers,

I am submitting my written comment on Bill 250989 before the Committee on Rules. I am in strong support of Councilmember Bass's bill to amend Title 10 of the Philadelphia code and add a new Section, Section 10-119, to impose a temporary moratorium on the breeding and selling of dogs under 7 months in Philadelphia.

I have been a Philadelphia resident for 20 years and have spent the last 13 years working as a shelter veterinarian in Philadelphia, including the open-admission municipal shelter ACCT Philly that intakes thousands of dogs a year. I also work in several low-cost medical and surgical clinics that provide accessible care to the public's pets.

I have performed emergency surgeries, treated infections, and managed the pain of abandoned and relinquished dogs used for breeding. I have seen scared, malnourished, abandoned dogs who arrive at the shelter dripping with milk after nursing puppies were abruptly weaned. I see extremely ill and dying

puppies who could have been spared their suffering with basic vaccination. I see the public health risks that unvaccinated, improperly dewormed, and unsocialized dogs pose to the community. And I see the exhausted and heartbroken staff who care for these dogs in a shelter that must take in all abandoned and surrendered dogs, even when beyond capacity.

I witness the heartbreak of dog owners who have no choice but to relinquish their pet in the hope that we can save their pet's life when they are unable to afford expensive medical treatments. I care for countless puppies purchased from breeders who present with life-threatening illness as a result of improper vaccination, or congenital diseases such as severe joint disease/deformity and brachycephalic (flat-faced) dogs who struggle to breathe. I also see the surrendered one year old dogs, purchased as puppies, by owners who can no longer afford dog food, veterinary care, or are frustrated by the behavior disorders caused by the breeder's improper socialization and bad genetics.

In low-cost clinics I hear desperate stories from people who didn't anticipate the expensive treatment their purchased dog requires. I see breeder paperwork that demonstrates that even basic care hasn't been provided. Inadequately vaccinated puppies can result in illness that costs thousands of dollars to treat. Consumers are often unprepared for the additional and ongoing costs of veterinary care, shortage of appointments, and long wait times at low-cost surgical and medical clinics. Well-intentioned consumers are often uneducated about the source of the puppies, as well as the genetic problems of various dog breeds that will later require expensive veterinary care. When owners cannot afford this care they are relinquished to overburdened shelters or they must make the difficult option of economic euthanasia. I'm haunted by the faces of scared and confused dogs who desperately search for their former family members.

Not only have I seen dog intake increase overall, I've seen an increase in purebred dogs such as French bulldogs and huskies. Intake data from ACCT Philly shows that indiscriminate or unregulated breeding is a primary driver of shelter crowding and dog relinquishment. Yet, for a minimum fee, a shelter dog who is already sterilized, vaccinated, and microchipped can be adopted, and if need be, returned to the shelter to get rehomed.

Alongside other shelter staff, I work tirelessly to ease the suffering of thousands of dogs. As more animals enter than exit shelters, even healthy animals are at risk of euthanasia. It is daunting and emotional work. Anything that can be done to staunch the flow of animals into shelters will help. We cannot spay and neuter our way out of this. We cannot adopt our way out of this. Imposing a temporary moratorium on the breeding and selling of dogs under 7 months in Philadelphia would have a substantial impact on the number of animals entering shelters, and alleviate some of the burden that falls on shelters and rescues. I urge you to support this bill that will improve both animal and human welfare.

Sincerely,

Melissa Resnick, DVM, MPH
Pennsylvania State Representative, Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance
329 S.25th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
melissa.resnick@gmail.com
215-459-1653

Bill No. 250989 Comment

From Brenda J <phillyadopt@gmail.com>

Date Thu 1/29/2026 10:37 AM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Good morning,

I am submitting a written comment on Bill No. 250989 introduced by Councilmember Bass to ask the committee to support this bill. As a volunteer of ACCT Philly since 2013, I have seen thousands of abandoned, diseased puppies come in to our doors, either by drop off by the breeder, "the finder (the actual breeder falsely claiming they found the dog)", abandonment in the lobby or parking lot in all weather conditions, and worse, in local areas in trash bags or bins, discarded as trash.

The backyard breeding in our city has only risen due to generations of families looking to make easy money, some by not knowing any better as they were raised in the environment of lawless breeding and by simple lack of spay/neuter laws here in the city.

Social media has aided in the breeding of dogs due to an easy target audience being able to be sold a puppy by simply commenting on a social media post. Dogs are not property to be sold on websites, but are to be bred in an ethical manner with the wellbeing of the animal in the forefront, not the amount of money it will bring in. Not having any laws to deter this breeding has led to puppies being sold in the middle of the street, outside of a local Walmart (Aramingo Ave), on all social media platforms and more.

They have been witnessed to be being jammed into one crate, sitting outside in the elements with a 'for sale' sign. Just 3 weeks ago there were 2 men selling puppies out of the back of their Mercedes SUV at Broad and Ontario Street, previously seen selling other puppies around Temple University. We have seen this same thing outside of the Wells Fargo Center - Toy poodles in a crate in 30 degree temps selling for \$2200.

Having dogs being bred by backyard breeders who do not vaccinate leads to a severe uptick in disease such as Parvo and Distemper, which leads to death without proper medical intervention. If they drop the litter off at ACCT Philly, this puts the entire population of shelter animals at risk of contracting this disease. According to the University of Wisconsin (a leader in Shelter Medicine who came to ACCT Philly in 2019 to aid in preventing disease in the shelter), Parvo can survive in dark soil for up to a year, leading to all future litters of backyard breeders susceptible to contracting this disease in a vicious, deadly cycle. Indoors, Parvo can live for months without the proper disinfectant that the average home does not have nor know about. Once these diseases are in the shelter setting, it becomes disastrous, as parvo is contracted by direct contact of infected dogs and shed by fecal

matter/vomit of infected dogs, which can be left on grass/concrete and carried into your own home by your shoes.

Aside from the diseases, backyard breeders do no comprehensive medical checks of the parents to ensure a healthy mix of DNA, this leads to medical disasters of a dog, as well as severe behavioral issues. When breeding isn't regulated, this can lead to dangerous dogs being bred over and over which leads them to be dumped at the shelter or on the streets due to medical and behavioral costs.

My current dog was my ACCT Philly foster that I adopted in 2019. I did an Embark DNA test which connects you to relatives who also do the DNA testing. My dog had 3 matches of relatives that I spoke to that were all at ACCT Philly before being sent to a rescue or being adopted out. That is just ONE litter of dogs where 3 ended up in our shelter system. Imagine the actual totals for ALL backyard litters. The numbers speak for themselves.

If this bill is passed, I would also seek more funding for ACCT Philly since they will be the leader in enforcing the law. They need the funding to hire more officers to investigate these cases as well as do their daily work of animal control. Involving the PSPCA and PPD in enforcement would be beneficial as well as it is way too much for one small, underfunded shelter.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for Councilwoman Bass for bringing this urgent, ongoing issue to the forefront.

Best,

Brenda Johnson

Amanda Eldridge
2707 E Monmouth St
Philadelphia, PA 19134
215-866-8437
dreldridge@acctphilly.org

January 27, 2026

To: City Council Committee

A Philadelphia Veterinarian's Perspective on Bill 250989

I am submitting written comment on Bill 250989 to ask for the committee's support on this bill.

As a veterinarian, I have seen first-hand the effects of irresponsible, backyard breeding within the City of Philadelphia. These are not isolated or occasional events—they are frequent, severe, and increasing in volume. The consequences thereof, including but not limited to, poor genetic planning resulting in congenital defects, complete lack of veterinary care, significant rise in **preventable** infectious diseases, and an increase in surrendered animals. This has increased over the past few years, leading to excessive amounts of unwanted animals left to be taken in by ACCT Philly; A trend that the shelter is not able to maintain, as space and resources remain limited.

Backyard breeding prioritizes profit over welfare. This is a deliberate and reckless practice. When overbred females are no longer profitable and puppies are no longer selling due to overabundance or illness, these animals are surrendered, or worse abandoned, and ACCT Philly picks up the pieces. Most of the animals from these conditions have had zero veterinary care—no vaccinations, no parasite prevention, no basic medical oversight—placing our city's animals and public health at risk. This failure to provide simple, but life-saving vaccinations has brought forth a reality where preventable diseases are becoming more common on intake at ACCT. We are seeing more parvovirus, a highly contagious and deadly disease among dogs requiring intensive care. We are also seeing diseases that place not only dogs at risk, but humans as well, including leptospirosis which causes kidney failure, and rabies which is 100% fatal. All of this places a significant strain on resources, ability to provide adequate care, and places the entirety of the population at unnecessary risk.

ACCT Philly, as the city's only open-intake shelter, has an enormous responsibility to the animals and the community, ensuring proper thought and care is provided to every individual that comes through those doors. However, the dogs never stop coming in, yet the space to house them does not grow. Staffing, medical resources, and funding remain limited, while the spectrum of care becomes increasingly complex. Each intake adds to an already overcrowded environment, creating a revolving door that prevents meaningful progress and long-term solutions.

The health risks associated with overpopulation cannot be overstated. Unvaccinated and unhealthy animals increase disease exposure to the remainder of the animals in the shelter, shelter staff, and the community. This is not a problem of shelter management—it is a systemic issue rooted in unregulated, irresponsible backyard breeding. A practice that has been unchecked in our city.

As a Philadelphia born and raised resident, as a veterinarian, and as an advocate for both animal welfare and public health, I strongly urge you to support this bill for a temporary ban of backyard breeding. This legislation represents a critical step toward reducing suffering, protecting our community, and giving ACCT Philly a fighting chance to fulfill its mission responsibly and humanely. Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to the welfare of our city.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Eldridge', written in a cursive style.

Amanda Eldridge, DVM CVA

Support of Council Bill 250989 Temporary moratorium on the breeding and sale of puppies in the city of Philadelphia

From Emma Nee <emmagnee@gmail.com>

Date Mon 1/26/2026 5:56 PM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Dear Philadelphia Councilperson Whitney Brown,

I am writing to express my strong support of Council Bill 250989 imposing a temporary moratorium on the breeding and sale of puppies in the city of Philadelphia.

This is an important step towards reducing the huge number of unwanted, neglected, abandoned and surrendered dogs in Philadelphia. I am a volunteer for ACCT and have some sense of the magnitude of the problem from my volunteer work. I am aware that the American Kennel Club has put out a call

for their members to oppose the bill, which is a self-serving position which does not show any empathy for the suffering of the large number of dogs in Philadelphia who are unwanted or neglected due to indiscriminate breeding for profit. The profit motive for breeding dogs leads to breeding of many more dogs than there are homes for here in Philadelphia. The problem lies in both registered and unregistered breeding operations. The excess dogs are abandoned on the streets, or in Fairmount Park by large numbers or are dropped off at ACCT as "found". I suspect an unknown number are also killed and disposed of. We must do better by the animals that cannot advocate for themselves. We must not allow the suffering to continue.

It is informative to view how the number of dogs taken into ACCT has grown over the last 5 years. In 2020, there were a total of 3985 dogs taken into the ACCT system. Compare to 2025, where 7430 dogs were taken in. The numbers increase every year (my rough estimate is around 8-9% the last few years). ACCT does an incredible job with the limited resources that they have. However the numbers are overwhelming and it results in healthy, adoptable dogs being killed ("euthanized") simply for lack of space and time spent in the shelter. Larger dogs, or less "desirable" colors, breeds, etc., are at risk through no fault of their own. The large number of dogs that need to quickly move through the system likely results in some dogs being released to inappropriate adopters, although that is a guess on my part. What's definite is that there are a large number of dogs rehomed multiple times or are found on the street with a registered chip, but the adopter will not claim them when contacted. So even good live release rates are not the whole picture of the unnecessary suffering that is occurring. Humans domesticated dogs thousands of years ago as companions. We are responsible for their well being. We need to do better to reduce the suffering of animals. We should not look away or be swayed by the voices of those who stand to profit from over breeding. A step in the right direction is to pass this bill to limit breeding for a 3-year period to bring down the number of unwanted dogs in this city.

As the owner of a rescue dog from ACCT Philly, I am writing to emphasize the importance of the proposed temporary moratorium. My dog, Bowie, was used for breeding and subsequently abandoned on the streets of Philadelphia during the summer. While she was fortunately rescued and provided with medical care, many dogs face far less positive outcomes.

We are seeing a consistent annual increase in the number of dogs being surrendered or abandoned. No animal deserves to be overbred and discarded. I urge you to consider this moratorium to provide these animals with the protections they require.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

--

Emma Nee
781-277-1256 (c)
emmagnee@gmail.com
ZIP CODE 19127

Public Comment in Support of Bill 250989

From Gabriella Patrone <creedsmom33@gmail.com>

Date Thu 1/29/2026 8:41 PM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Dear Members of the Rules Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Bill 250989 and to thank Councilmember Cindy Bass for introducing legislation that directly addresses the growing crisis facing Philadelphia's animal shelters, rescue organizations, and residents.

For several years, shelters in our city have seen dog intake increase by nearly 1,000 animals annually, with an average of more than 20 dogs entering the shelter each day. This level of intake is unsustainable and places an enormous strain on limited shelter resources, staff, volunteers, and foster homes—while also increasing the risk of euthanasia for healthy, adoptable animals.

Bill 250989 is a thoughtful, targeted response to this crisis. By placing a temporary moratorium on the breeding and sale of dogs under seven months of age—while explicitly exempting nonprofit rescues and state-licensed breeders—the bill focuses on reducing irresponsible breeding without penalizing ethical rescue work or legitimate, regulated operations.

The consequences of unchecked breeding are visible throughout our city: senior dogs discarded after years of use, litters of puppies entering shelters already sick with preventable illnesses like parvovirus, families facing devastating veterinary bills after unknowingly purchasing unhealthy puppies, and neighborhoods affected by unsafe situations stemming from unmanaged breeding. These outcomes are harmful not only to animals, but also to public health and community safety.

Data from ACCT Philly further underscores the urgency of this issue. DNA sampling has revealed that a significant percentage of dogs entering the shelter are closely related, demonstrating the impact of repeated, irresponsible breeding within the city. This bill offers a necessary pause—one that allows Philadelphia to stabilize shelter intake, protect animals, and work toward more sustainable, humane solutions.

I urge the Committee to move Bill 250989 forward and allow it to proceed to public hearing. This legislation represents a responsible and compassionate step toward addressing a crisis that affects animals, families, and neighborhoods across Philadelphia.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to the welfare of our city.

Sincerely,

Gabriella Patrone

Philadelphia Resident

Emily A. Nelson, VMD
717 N. 2nd St.
Philadelphia, PA 19123
emilyynelsonn@gmail.com

January 27, 2026

Dear Members of City Council,

I write as a small animal veterinarian practicing in the greater Philadelphia region to support **Bill No. 250989** and to respectfully ask the Committee on Rules to advance the bill as written. This temporary three-year measure to prohibit breeding dogs or selling dogs under seven months old in Philadelphia will not restrict adoptions by nonprofit animal rescues nor affect breeders licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; rather, it targets practices that contribute to overpopulation and preventable suffering.

Pets that are bred by unlicensed individuals in homes or informal settings, also known as “backyard breeding,” harms our community in multiple ways. Animals bred this way often lack proper health screening, vaccinations, and socialization, which increases the spread of preventable diseases and creates behavioral problems that can make animals unsafe in homes. Animal welfare is often not prioritized in these situations and litters may be produced in unsanitary conditions and without veterinary oversight. This leads to higher rates of congenital health problems and infectious illness. These outcomes place added strain on local animal shelters and rescue organizations, which must care for and medically treat an influx of animals that are less adoptable due to health or behavioral issues.

Backyard breeding also contributes directly to euthanasia rates in our community. When shelters become overcrowded with under-socialized, sick, or genetically compromised animals, they lack the resources and space to provide long-term care for every animal in need.

Should the bill be enacted, ACCT Philly will partner to provide free spay and neuter services for dogs in the 25 most under-resourced zip codes, a program I strongly support. These targeted services will help reduce the number of stray animals, limit spread of disease, and decrease unnecessary euthanasia of otherwise healthy animals. These are outcomes that directly impact public health and animal welfare in Philadelphia. For these reasons, I urge the Committee to vote Bill No. 250989 out of committee with no amendments.

Sincerely,

Emily A. Nelson

Emily A. Nelson, VMD
Small Animal Veterinarian

January 23, 2026

Halle C. Mitchell, DVM
1015 N. American Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
dr.mitchellh@gmail.com

Dear Members of City Council,

I am writing in strong support of **Bill 250989**, introduced by Councilmember Cindy Bass.

I am a veterinarian working in several different clinics in Philadelphia including primary care practices, low cost clinics, emergency and specialty hospitals and at the ACCT Philly shelter. Working in numerous different Philadelphia veterinary venues, I am in a unique position to see just how far reaching and devastating the effects of back yard breeding truly are. Across the board, no matter what hospital I am working at, the amount of *preventable* suffering I see as a result of the pet overpopulation crisis is harrowing.

The majority of dogs entering our shelter system are not coming from ethical, licensed breeders. They are the result of uncontrolled breeding, lack of access to veterinary care, and decisions made without regard for the long-term welfare of the animals or the capacity of our city to care for them.. Despite our best efforts and the amazing people in the rescue community who work absolutely tirelessly to save these animals, there are simply not enough resources to meet the immense need. The bottom line is that ***we are drowning.***

Backyard breeding directly contributes to animal suffering, shelter overcrowding, and preventable euthanasia. Many of the dogs we receive arrive with untreated medical conditions, genetic issues, behavioral challenges, and no plan for lifelong care. This places an enormous strain not only on shelters and rescues, but also on veterinary professionals tasked with managing preventable illness and suffering with limited resources.

Bill 250989 is a thoughtful, targeted approach that addresses these issues while preserving responsible practices. It does **not** restrict nonprofit rescue adoptions or state-licensed breeders, but instead creates a necessary pause that allows the city to reduce overpopulation, support spay/neuter efforts, and protect animal welfare.

As a shelter veterinarian, I strongly support measures that prioritize prevention over crisis response. Reducing the number of dogs born into circumstances where they are likely to suffer or be surrendered is one of the most effective ways to improve animal welfare outcomes in Philadelphia.

I urge the City Council to support and pass Bill 250989.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the welfare of animals in our city.

Sincerely,

Halle C. Mitchell

Halle C. Mitchell, DVM
Small Animal Veterinarian

Breeding ban in Philadelphia

From Arlene Quinn <kjaquinn@gmail.com>
Date Sat 1/24/2026 4:34 AM
To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Existing state laws currently govern dog breeding and licensing requirements. I am writing to request that you refrain from imposing additional restrictions on breeders who are already in compliance with these regulations.

Rather than introducing further mandates, I suggest allocating resources to hire additional personnel dedicated to identifying and investigating individuals who exceed state breeding limits without the required licensure.

Best regards,

Arlene Quinn

Council Bill 25098900 Limit Dog Breeding - Support

From J <jeannekohl@gmail.com>

Date Mon 1/26/2026 1:11 PM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Dear Philadelphia Councilperson,

I am writing to express my strong support of Council Bill 25098900 imposing a temporary moratorium on the breeding and sale of puppies in the city of Philadelphia.

This is an important step towards reducing the huge number of unwanted, neglected, abandoned and surrendered dogs in Philadelphia. I am a volunteer for ACCT and have some sense of the magnitude of the problem from my volunteer work. I am aware that the American Kennel Club has put out a call for their members to oppose the bill, which is a self-serving position which does not show any empathy for the suffering of the large number of dogs in Philadelphia who are unwanted or neglected due to indiscriminate breeding for profit. The profit motive for breeding dogs leads to breeding of many more dogs than there are homes for here in Philadelphia. The problem lies in both registered and unregistered breeding operation. The excess dogs are abandoned on the streets, or in Fairmount Park by large numbers or are dropped off at ACCT as "found". I suspect an unknown number are also killed and disposed of. We must do better by the animals that cannot advocate for themselves. We must not allow the suffering to continue.

It is informative to view how the number of dogs taken into ACCT has grown over the last 5 years. In 2020, there were a total of 3985 dogs taken into the ACCT system. Compare to 2025, where 7430 dogs were taken in. The numbers increase every year (my rough estimate is around 8-9% the last few years). ACCT does an incredible job with the limited resources that they have. However the numbers are overwhelming and it results in healthy, adoptable dogs being killed ("euthanized") simply for lack of space and time spent in the shelter. Larger dogs, or less "desirable" colors, breeds, etc., are at risk through no fault of their own. The large number of dogs that need to quickly move through the system likely results in some dogs being released to inappropriate adopters, although that is a guess on my part. What's definite is that there are a large number of dogs that are rehomed multiple times or are found on the street with a registered chip, but the adopter will not claim them when contacted. So even good live release rates are not the whole picture of the unnecessary suffering that is occurring. Humans domesticated dogs thousands of years ago as companions. We are responsible for their well being. We need to do better to reduce the suffering of animals. We should not look away or be swayed by the voices of those who stand to profit from over breeding. A step in the right direction is to pass this bill to limit breeding for a 3-year period to bring down the number of unwanted dogs in this city.

Thank you for your time in reading my letter.

Sincerely,
Jeanne Kohl
Philadelphia 19123

pinelandsunleashedrescueco@gmail.com

RE: Strong Support for Bill #250989 – Moratorium on Dog Breeding and Sales

Dear Councilmember Bass and Members of the Rules Committee,

On behalf of **Pinelands Unleashed Rescue Co**, I am writing to formally express our strong support for **Bill #250989**. While Pinelands Unleashed is a New Jersey-based rescue, two of our board members are from the greater Philadelphia area. Our rescue has boots on the ground in Philadelphia daily and a long history of serving the Philadelphia/Pennsylvania community.

As a dog rescue operating on the front lines of the animal welfare community, we see the devastating reality of the city's shelter crisis every single day. We believe this legislation is a critical, common-sense "first step" to stemming the tide of unwanted animals and curbing the rampant issue of backyard breeding in our city and state.

The Current Crisis Our city's shelters and rescues are operating in a state of emergency. Facilities like ACCT Philly are frequently over capacity, forcing impossible decisions upon staff and volunteers. We are seeing a relentless influx of dogs entering the system—many of whom are the direct result of indiscriminate, abusive, and unregulated breeding.

At Pinelands Unleashed, we regularly intake Philadelphia dogs that:

- **Are sick with preventable diseases:** We see Giardia, kennel cough, and Parvovirus, often traced back to unhygienic breeding conditions.
- **Suffer from neglect:** Dogs arrive with extreme emaciation due to neglect from breeders/owners or after being abandoned on the streets.
- **Are "Trendy" breeds:** We see a high volume of Belgian Malinois and Pitbull-type dogs that were bred for quick profit but abandoned when they didn't sell or when the owners realized the care they required.
- **Are surrendered simply for space:** Many are surrendered solely because there are too many dogs and not enough homes.

Stopping the Inflow We cannot adopt our way out of this crisis. While rescues work tirelessly to find foster and adoptive homes, the supply of puppies from backyard breeders continues to outpace our capacity to save them. The "timestamp" list of mandatory euthanasia due to lack of space at ACCT continues to grow, while breeders' pockets continue to fill with money.

Bill #250989 provides a necessary "pause button". By implementing a temporary moratorium on the breeding and selling of dogs, we can give our city's shelter system the breathing room it desperately needs to stabilize, regroup, and adapt.

A First Step Toward a Solution We understand that this bill is a moratorium and not a permanent ban, and we view it as the vital first step in a larger strategy. It sends a powerful

message that Philadelphia prioritizes the humane treatment of animals over the profits of unregulated breeders.

While we support this immediate moratorium, we also present the following long-term solutions for your future consideration:

- Taxation on the sale of dogs.
- Mandatory breeder registration and enforcement.
- Mandatory microchipping of puppies prior to sale.
- Mandatory spay/neuter of pet dogs prior to sale.
- Mandatory health and genetic testing prior to breeding parents.
- A ban on the sale of *cosmetically* cropped and docked puppies.

Personal Testimony The Board at Pinelands Unleashed Rescue Co has over 35 years of combined experience in dog rescue. This comes from years of volunteering at ACCT, fostering, and running donation campaigns. We encourage members who consider voting against this bill to visit ACCT and **bear witness** to the crisis our shelter system faces daily. We ask you to listen to the volunteers who care so deeply for saving lives, despite being constantly criticized online.

We invite you to read the story of an ACCT save named **Griswold** (formerly "Ted"):

Griswold was brought to ACCT Philly as an emaciated stray puppy. Weighing only 10 or 11 pounds at 6 months old, he was frail and weak, but remained kind and soft-spirited. Though he could not stand for very long, he still found the energy to wag his tail and kiss volunteers.

His muscles were so atrophied he could not hold his urine; it would pour out of him onto himself while he laid down. His eyes could not stay straight in his sockets and would often fall to the side if he tried to focus for too long. We took Griswold into the care of our rescue, and he began a refeeding plan in the home of one of our fosters. His foster family cared for him tirelessly—four meals a day, strengthening exercises, training, and most of all, love.

Today, Griswold is at a much healthier weight. He runs, he plays, and he knows where his next meal is coming from. He lived to one day see adoption. It took him months to recover from human inflicted harm and neglect.

However, not all dogs in our city shelters are so lucky. We are calling on you to advocate for them, the voiceless, and the lives of those already so meaninglessly lost.

Conclusion We urge the Rules Committee to pass Bill #250989 without delay. The lives of thousands of dogs—and the mental well-being of the compassionate city shelter workers trying to save them—depend on it. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Emily Schreck- Secretary and ACCT volunteer

Jillian Dracup- Director

Rachel Maio and Lily Snow- Founders and Presidents

Pinelands Unleashed Recuse Co

Bill 250989

From ian griffiths <oz7826@yahoo.com>
Date Wed 1/21/2026 9:20 PM
To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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I would like to comment on bill 250989, the backyard breeders bill .
My name is Ian griffiths (cell no 267 4088904) , I'm a resident of Northern Liberties , a 10 yr volunteer at acct philly and a Kensington landlord and hope the bill will be voted out of committee and eventually passed into law.

There are 2 nos I would like the council to look at . 0 and 95,985 .
0 is the no of dogs who've left acct , the pspca , rescues, doggy style and other pet stores who were NOT spayed and neutered in the last 14 yrs .
95,985 ! is the no of dogs who've been dumped at acct since acct was formed Jan 1 2012 - dec 31 2025 . So where did these 95,985 dogs come from ?

The vast majority of these dogs were philly bred dogs (aka pit bulls) and nearly 100% of these 95,985 were either a) born from a mom who was the property of a back yard breeder or b) their lineage can be traced to a mom owned by a back yard breeder eg their grandmother was the property of a breeder .

Sometime this year acct will have taken in their 100k th dog. And this has been getting worse , year after year from 2020 . In 2025 dog intake was almost double the intake of 2020 , 7430 dogs v 3985 dogs . In the final 8 months of the year acct had between 600 and 650 dogs EVERY month , ie 20 to 22 dogs EVERY SINGLE DAY! AND at the end of the year , we all said " were glad this year is over, 2026 can't be any worse " and then the first 8 days of 26 acct got 200 dogs , 25 dogs every day !
This obviously is a tragedy of tremendous proportions due to the euthanasia of the beautiful dogs that this level of intake guarantees .

Unless a council member has a special interest in animal welfare there can be a tendency to look at acct's live release rate and think " 80 something % is very good " and then move on to the next issue. But please consider this. In 2019 665 acct dogs were euthanized, in 2020 421 were euthanized BUT in 2025 1,205 dogs were euthanized, ie 3.3 dogs were euthanized EVERY SINGLE DAY !!! Some of these dogs were aggressive dogs but most were good dogs with no behavioral issues or minor ones (when acct has no kennels open for incoming dogs they have to choose who gets euthanized, a perfect dog or a dog with a minor behavioral issue or a minor injury so obviously the ones with minor issues are euthanized first and then the perfect ones next)

If I could get council members to do one thing before voting on this bill it would be to take a visit to acct and watch a dog who's been selected for euthanasia , be walked back to the e room. Due to being grossly understaffed , our dogs only get out of their kennels once a day for 5 to 15 min tops so when that staff person comes and opens the kennel door and puts the leash on the dog about to be euthanized, you'll see the dog hop straight out with a very loose wagging tail , a huge smile on their

face and will probably be jumping up a bit because they are just so excited because they think they are going outside to play and have no idea they are instead headed to the e room and won't come out alive . If council people saw that just once I'm confident this bill would pass 18-0 .

This bill needs to pass for 2 reasons a) dogs lives are very important and b) human mental health is also very important.

A) If the bill passes, there is a great chance that intake and euthanasia will drop from the 7000s and 1200 respectively back down to 2019 and 2020 levels saving about 800 dogs lives as if Philadelphians can't adopt puppies from breeders then those that really want dogs , if they can't buy puppies from breeders then they are much more likely to adopt a dog from acct and open up more kennel space . 800 dogs is a LOT of lives and by itself is MORE than enough reason to pass the bill . In addition the dogs these people adopt will all be spayed and neutered so they won't be contributing to the problem with offspring .

B) if the bill passes then this will directly affect the mental health of hundreds of Philadelphians . Think about all the people who are absolutely gutted nearly every day , having to deal with this mass euthanasia crisis of philly bred dogs. You have the kennel attendants who have to walk the very happy dogs back to the e room , never to come out . Then the medical staff who have to do the euthanasia, they got into the industry because they love animals but end up having to euthanize 3 dogs and X cats a day . ask acct management how long the average kennel attendants and vet techs last at acct . Then there are the lifesaving staff and adoption staff . Besides the 3 dogs euthanized every day , there are 3 additional dogs who are THREATENED with euthanasia EVERY day (ie they have to leave today or they will be euthanized) . life saving and adoption staff are constantly on the phone and email all day communicating with any leads they have about getting these 3 dogs out of acct that day , to save their lives , knowing that if they aren't successful then those 3 dogs that day will also be walked back to the e room on top of the 3 dogs who have already been euthed. Then there are the volunteers who make the videos of these dogs who've been threatened with euthanasia (called time stamp dogs) and finally there are the hundreds of people in Philadelphia who sit at home, sharing the promo videos and networking continuously all day on every form of social media, trying desperately to locate anyone who can take one of the 3 dogs . AND if successful you get to celebrate for 1 min as at the end of that minute you have to start networking for the next days 3 time stamped dogs and then the day after that's 3 time stamped dogs . 90 timestamped dogs every month! It's a never ending cycle. Animal welfare should be human mental health care .

As a Kensington landlord who lets my tenants have cats and dogs, I've always told my tenants to come to acct and adopt a pet and its been very very frustrating over the years as on so many occasions I've gone into one of my properties and see a new pit puppy and I'll ask " did you go to acct and adopt him " and they'll say " no, someone told me that Jimmy at the end of the block had puppies for sale so I went down there and bought him, isn't he beautiful " and that's one less pit bull dog who'll be adopted at acct, meaning one more dog euthed at acct .

So obviously if more people didn't buy from breeders then those people would then go to acct , pspca , doggy style stores (which have acct dogs and cats) and local rescues and adopt a dog from one of these places and less dogs would be euthed and less unfixed dogs would be on the streets . I'm sure acct mngt can tell you how many dogs one female pit bull at a breeders 20 yrs ago is approximately responsible for through multiple generations.

I've often thought if phillys pit bulls could borrow the infinity stones from the avengers and go back 15000 yrs in time to meet the wolves who hung around human camps and jump started their evolution from independent wolves into dogs dependant on humans , that our philly pits would yell at the wolves to stay the hell away from the camp!

And during the 3 yrs moratorium then some additional solutions can be implemented.

I know I'm not supposed to deviate from the bill but here are 2 quick suggestions. 1) make homeless shelters pet friendly so families could also bring their pets with them when they enter a shelter . Over 1000 dogs a yr are dumped at acct as people are on the way to a homeless shelter and those people are absolutely gutted when they have to dump their dog at acct. Pittsburgh has 2 homeless shelters where people can bring their pets with them when they enter the shelter and even upper Darby has one . I've seen one or 2 people who were lucky enough to leave their homeless shelter quickly and they've come back to acct to reclaim their dog and they are just so so very happy .

2) meld affordable housing with animal welfare- if a landlord rents out a home or appt for \$ 1k or less a month AND allows pets in the home then let the landlord claim the homestead exemption (or some other incentive)

But this bill is a great start for animal welfare reform in Philadelphia. If council people can see these lives as just as important as human lives I'm sure this bill will pass . I'm sure every council member with a dog or cat knows their beauty but I hope that every council person can come to acct and have a look for one day, if they have any doubts on this bill . Our philly bred dogs are such beautiful souls and deserve all the help we can give them.

Ian griffiths

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)



STREET TAILS
ANIMAL RESCUE



Public Comment on Bill 250989

Submitted on behalf of Street Tails Animal Rescue

To the Members of Philadelphia City Council:

I'm writing on behalf of Street Tails Animal Rescue, but also on behalf of the countless dogs who come through our doors scared, sick, confused, and simply out of chances. Every day, we see the reality of Philadelphia's animal welfare crisis up close — and it is heartbreaking. That's why we are urging you to support Bill 250989.

Our city's shelters are overwhelmed. ACCT Philly has been operating at or above capacity for far too long, and rescues like ours are doing everything we can to keep up. We take in dogs who have been abandoned, neglected, or surrendered by families who simply don't have the resources to care for them. We see animals who need medical treatment, behavioral support, and stability after months of chaos. We do this work because we love them — but the system is stretched beyond its limits.

And unregulated breeding is pouring gasoline on an already burning fire.

Not long ago, a backyard breeder set up just feet from our rescue and began selling puppies out of the trunk of his car. These were tiny, vulnerable puppies — the very animals who end up in overcrowded shelters when they get sick, when buyers can't handle them, or when they're no longer profitable. When our staff approached him out of concern for the dogs' welfare, he retaliated by photographing our team without consent, posting the images online, and leaving false negative reviews of our rescue.

This wasn't just upsetting. It was frightening. It was demoralizing. And it was a stark reminder of how urgently Philadelphia needs stronger protections for animals and for the people who care for them.

Bill 250989 offers a temporary, reasonable pause on breeding and puppy transfers so the city can catch its breath. It gives shelters and rescues a fighting chance. It gives dogs a chance at safety. And it gives Philadelphia the opportunity to build a more humane, sustainable system.

As you consider this bill, we ask that you ensure:

- Clear, enforceable measures that curb irresponsible breeding
- Support for community resources like low-cost vet care and spay/neuter services
- Ongoing collaboration with rescues and shelters who see these issues firsthand

☎ (267) 761-9434

✉ info@streettails.org

📍 1030 N 2nd Street, Suite 401 Philadelphia, PA 19123

🌐 www.streettails.org





STREET TAILS
ANIMAL RESCUE



Street Tails Animal Rescue is ready to be part of the solution. We want a city where dogs aren't suffering in overcrowded kennels, where backyard breeders can't exploit animals for profit, and where the people who dedicate their lives to animal welfare feel protected and supported.

Thank you for taking this crisis seriously and for considering Bill 250989. The animals of Philadelphia — and the people who fight for them — are counting on you.

Respectfully,

Nicole de la Rosa, President
Street Tails Animal Rescue
1030 N. 2nd Street, Suite 401
Philadelphia, PA 19123
delarosa@streettails.org

(267) 761-9434
 info@streettails.org

1030 N 2nd Street, Suite 401 Philadelphia, PA 19123
 www.streettails.org



Testimony for the 2/3 Hearing on Temporary Moratorium on Breeding in Philadelphia

From Marie Marinakis <mariem6026@gmail.com>

Date Sun 1/18/2026 8:20 PM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Hi Whitney,

I submitted the following letter to Councilmember Cindy Bass and would like to have it included in the hearing if possible.

I have volunteered at ACCT Philly since August of 2013 and feel that this organization takes extraordinary measures to find homes for the animals in their care. ACCT has a robust foster program, works with almost 200 rescue groups, and places numerous dogs at Doggie Style Pets stores. ACCT has adoptable cats at several PetSmart locations and holds adoption events at local businesses. The shelter also has a monthly transport program for cats and dogs with the Massachusetts SPCA and participates in nationwide adoption promotions like "Clear the Shelters" and "Empty the Shelters." But, it's an unending battle when intake is so high year-round.

Ironically, the No Kill movement works against city animal control facilities like ACCT Philly, because their solution is to limit or suspend intake and leave pets on the streets to fend for themselves. They also bring animals from other states into areas already inundated with homeless pets.

I volunteer in ACCT Philly's laundry room every Sunday and have gotten to know many of the shelter's animal care associates/kennel staff. These young men and women take a personal interest in the animals that they care for, and every death affects them profoundly. In addition to animal suffering, the overpopulation crisis takes a huge toll on shelter staff, volunteers, and the rescue groups who try to save these animals.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and the best solution is to ban/strictly regulate backyard breeding in the city and enforce it with stiff fines. Free spay/neuter programs are also essential, because vet fees often prevent low-income residents from fixing their pets. But, as long as people can make money from dog breeding, they will continue to do so. Thank you again for your efforts to end this vicious cycle!

Thank you!

Marie A. Marinakis

Phone: 610-585-0984

Testimony For the Moratorium on Backyard Breeding

From Dana Peel <dana.peel@gmail.com>

Date Sun 1/18/2026 10:50 AM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

 1 attachment (8 KB)

Backyard Breeding Moratorium.docx;

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Hi Ms. Brown,

I have attached my testimony to this email for the moratorium on backyard breeding. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,
Dana Peel

I am writing to ask that you sincerely consider the moratorium on backyard breeding in Philadelphia.

As a lifelong Philadelphia resident; former Animal Care and Control Team (ACCT) Philly employee; and ACCT adoptive parent, foster, and volunteer; I have seen the dangers that backyard breeding causes for animals, community members, and taxpayers first hand.

During my time at ACCT, I have seen countless overbred animals from backyard breeders surrendered to the shelter after they have served their purpose. Having gone through multiple pregnancies and raising way too many litters, these cats and dogs are then brought to the shelter like an old pair of socks with holes in them that no longer serve their purpose. With hundreds of animals entering ACCT's care every single day, euthanasia is no longer the answer for only old and sick cats and dogs who cannot be helped. Unfortunately, with new animals being surrendered to ACCT and needing a kennel to be placed, euthanasia to create space is the only option. Happy and healthy animals are euthanized to create space for the never ending animals surrendered to ACCT. Backyard breeding in an already oversaturated city leads to higher numbers of space-based euthanasia of happy and healthy animals waiting for their forever home. Despite this harsh reality, backyard breeders continue to produce more litters of puppies and kittens than there are families able to care for them responsibly. These animals often end up walking through ACCT's doors- some healthy and adoptable, others sick or behaviorally challenged, greatly worsening overcrowding and space-based euthanasia.

In addition, both cats and dogs that come from backyard breeders present public health and safety issues in our community. Backyard breeders rarely socialize their litters, leading to undersocialized animals who are more prone to biting entering our community daily. In a city as densely populated as Philadelphia, it is only a matter of time before a dangerous cat or dog from a backyard breeder comes into contact with a community member. As many as 50% of cat bites become infected and the dangers do not end there. Most animals from backyard breeders are not vaccinated. Without vaccines, rabies and other illnesses can easily be spread through bites and even cat scratches, resulting in a very real public health issue for Philadelphians.

In addition to all of the public health and safety issues, backyard breeders put a strain on public funding and taxpayers. In the past fiscal year, ACCT Philly received 7.55 billion dollars from the City of Philadelphia. While 7.55 million is a huge strain on community members, it is still not nearly enough to care for 13,816 animals that entered their care in 2025 alone. This is the number of living animals that entered their care. It does not include the many deceased animals that are brought to ACCT that also need to be cremated to protect the community. With ACCT already struggling due to high demand, each litter from a backyard breeder intensifies the strain on public resources and ultimately costs taxpayers money. With a ban on backyard breeding in Philadelphia, these funds can be used to fix the pothole you hit on your way to work everyday that makes you say "ooooo" or help fund the schools that your children attend, anything to make the City of Philadelphia better.

In conclusion, backyard breeding fuels pet overpopulation, worsens shelter overcrowding, imposes significant costs on taxpayers, and creates public health risks. The need to ban backyard breeding in Philadelphia is clear. Banning backyard breeding will protect animals, reduce unnecessary public spending and support a healthier community. Please "yes" on the moratorium for backyard breeding in Philadelphia.

Written Public Comment in Support of Bill No. 250989

Committee on Rules
Philadelphia City Council

Submitted by: Melinda Vanvaria
Philadelphia Resident – District 5

January 18, 2026

To the Honorable Members of Philadelphia City Council,

I am submitting written public comment on Bill No. 250989, before the Committee on Rules, to urge the Committee to advance the bill as written and vote it out of committee without amendments.

I am a longtime Philadelphia resident actively engaged in Fairmount neighborhood civic and community development organizations. I have been a volunteer with ACCT Philly since 2018, including leading volunteer-run programs focused on advocacy for shelter animals and community outcomes. I have also fostered multiple dogs who entered the shelter system as a direct result of unregulated breeding.

In recent years, I have observed a steady increase in shelter population alongside a growing prevalence of animals entering the shelter with medical complexities, genetic defects, and in poor physical condition after being abandoned in public community spaces.

This impacts the entire community, including City-funded costs, rescue partners absorbing medical cases, adopters facing unexpected and catastrophic veterinary expenses, and neighborhood safety concerns when dogs and puppies are abandoned in public spaces. My testimony reflects firsthand experience of the operational, community, and public-resource impacts of this issue.

Shelter Capacity and Community Impact

ACCT Philly has been operating above capacity. Intake has outpaced expanded funding and resources year over year, adoption rates have declined, and rescue partners are overleveraged. The result has been an increase in euthanasia for space—not because dogs are unadoptable, but because the shelter system is overwhelmed.

This outcome affects more than animals.

Bill No. 250989 addresses this crisis by temporarily reducing preventable intake at the source, while expanded access to spay and neuter services helps ensure the policy does not disproportionately impact under-resourced communities.

As long as this crisis persists, City-funded resources, partner organizations, and community efforts remain consumed by overcapacity management, rather than being directed toward preventive support, equitable access to pet care, and initiatives that strengthen overall community well-being.

Loss of Effective Shelter Programs Due to Overcapacity

During my time at ACCT Philly, I served as a lead volunteer for PenPals, a program designed to increase the adoptability of long-term shelter residents by preparing them for stable placement in the community. PenPal dogs received targeted advocacy, enrichment, and training focused on best-fit adoption home placements and reduced return rates.

In recent years, PenPals was dissolved—not due to lack of volunteers, but because shelter length of stay has become severely constrained by overcapacity. Under current conditions, dogs are at risk of euthanasia in as little as two weeks.

This represents a systemic breakdown driven by intake volume, which this bill directly seeks to mitigate.

Foster Experiences Demonstrating Preventable Harm

Through my experience fostering for ACCT Philly, I have observed recurring patterns of preventable harm resulting from unregulated breeding. The following examples illustrate these impacts.

1. Foster Dogs – Izzy and Millie

In 2021, my dog Izzy was found abandoned and tied in an alley as a puppy. She was in poor physical condition and required surgical correction for bilateral cherry eye. I cared for her as a medical foster through recovery and ultimately adopted her.

In 2023, I fostered Millie, who was found abandoned in my Fairmount neighborhood at a children's playground along with her two puppies. Millie was in poor physical condition and showed clear signs of repeated breeding. She was adopted locally; her puppies were transferred to rescue partners.

Subsequent Embark DNA testing identified Izzy and Millie as littermates with 68% shared DNA, an unusually high degree of relatedness consistent with a closed or inbred genetic pool associated with unregulated breeding practices.

Millie was later diagnosed with a severe, life-threatening immune disease, requiring nearly a week of hospitalization at Penn. Her care was financially devastating for the adopter and required community fundraising. Both Izzy's cherry eye and Millie's immune disorder have genetic components, demonstrating a repeated pattern of irresponsible breeding. Millie's

abandonment with puppies in a public playground also raises significant community safety concerns.

Their divergent outcomes illustrate the compounding harm of unregulated breeding—one dog receiving care and spay access, and another exploited for breeding, resulting in additional medically complex dogs impacting the community.

2. Foster Dog – Birch

Birch was found at approximately two months old, abandoned in a box with two littermates, all in poor physical condition. One puppy required immediate surgical correction for bilateral cherry eye and was transferred to a local rescue partner. Birch was transferred to an out-of-state ACCT Philly partner organization, where she later developed bilateral cherry eye and required two surgeries, both financially covered by the receiving organization. These medically necessary procedures were costly and traumatic, representing downstream impacts of unregulated breeding originating in Philadelphia.

3. Foster Dog – Max

Max, my current foster, was found abandoned in a community playground at approximately two months old and in poor physical condition. He was diagnosed with two severe congenital heart defects: Tricuspid Valve Dysplasia and Pulmonic Stenosis.

Both conditions are rare congenital defects; their co-occurrence is rarer still and widely recognized in veterinary medicine as consistent with hereditary origin rather than random occurrence. Max's condition has required extensive diagnostics and specialty care and significantly impacts his quality of life and life expectancy. Responsible, regulated breeding practices are designed to prevent the propagation of such defects.

These cases illustrate a pattern of preventable harm that strains City resources, burdens adopters and rescue partners, and negatively affects neighborhoods. Bill No. 250989 introduces a temporary, targeted moratorium, paired with expanded spay and neuter access—an approach that balances animal welfare, community equity, and public responsibility.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee on Rules advance Bill No. 250989 as written and vote it out of committee without amendments.

Thank you for your consideration.

Melinda Vanvaria
Philadelphia Resident – District 5



Bad breeding

From Peg Harley <harley451@icloud.com>
Date Mon 1/19/2026 9:25 PM
To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Please help make dogs safer in the city!

We have enough to deal with and support without adding in the horrible breeding standards that have become too common.

Thank you.

Bill to put a temporary moratorium on breeding

From Ann Cinque <ann.cinque.pease@gmail.com>

Date Mon 1/19/2026 5:47 PM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Dear Committee Clerk Brown,

Please support the bill that has been introduced by Councilmember Cindy Bass to put a temporary moratorium on breeding.

I'm writing as a volunteer at ACCT and rescue advocate. My husband and I first rescued our first dog two weeks after we came back from our honeymoon, over 20 years ago. His name was Murphy and he was the sweetest pitbull puppy. Since then, we have rescued many other dogs (Jackson, Clemintine, Max, Lola, Rosa) and fostered a few others. We raised our daughter to love animals as well - in fact she grew up volunteering at a small rescue with me every Sunday.

As a long-time volunteer, I've seen so many dogs spend months waiting for a home, and sadly, others lose their life because of shelter overcrowding. I've seen animals come in with horrible medical conditions due to negligent breeders.

I appreciate your attention to this bill, and support in seeing this passed.

Best,

Ann Marie Cinque Pease

342 Wharton Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147



Outlook

Breeding Moratorium

From Barbie Berkowitz <barbiedoll1216@gmail.com>

Date Sat 1/17/2026 9:48 AM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Please pass this bill.

This is **EXTREMELY** important as it could significantly impact the amount of strays that are the result of only an inability to afford the procedure.

There are too many voiceless animals that are homeless by circumstance and have so much love and acceptance to give.

With gratitude,

Barbie B

Sent from my iPhone

Bill 250989

From Dave Gansz <terveurn@hotmail.com>

Date Sat 1/31/2026 11:36 AM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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I am in support of the bill being passed.

The American Kennel Club (no matter what they claim) does not support the welfare of dogs. The AKC when pressed claims to be "a club of clubs" and does not have the interests of individuals or their dogs.

As a matter of fact, the American Kennel Club actively supports "Puppy Mills" giving these dirty farms a cut rate on registering their dogs with the AKC.

If you want to see a dark secret, ask the American Kennel Club about there registration drive in the years between 2002 ~ 2010 where they allowed thousands of puppy mill dog to be retroativly registered.

The American Kennel club is upset as you are interfering in their cash flow (and not because you are harimg the dogs)

Sincerely

David M. Gansz
Verona, NJ

Bill 250989 3 yr breeding ban

From TONI KELLER <tmk.rm@comcast.net>
Date Sun 2/1/2026 6:44 PM
To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Dear Ms Brown,

Due to work commitments I am unable to attend any hearings regarding the Philadelphia City Counsel Committee's consideration of a 3 yr moratorium on breeding animals. I would therefore like to submit my testimony in favor of this ban. We all know the shelters throughout PA are overcrowded and animals are being euthanized for space on a regular basis. In Philadelphia the situation is dire. Rescues are fully overwhelmed with homeless animals and there are just not enough fosters. A breeding ban would help to alleviate the situation and allow the system to recover to a certain degree.

The American Kennel Club will lobby the council hard and try to make a case for responsible breeding. In truth, there is simply no such thing. There are not enough safe homes for all these animals they are bringing into the world in an effort to make a profit. They should truly get a real job and stop living off of animals which they forcibly impregnate. I urge the council members to do their research on how all this works. It is just not pretty.

As a lover of animals, I am begging the council to ban breeding and impose stiff fines when a breeder is found to be operating against the ban. It's the humane thing to do!

Thank you so much for considering a 3 yr ban! I pray it passes into law.

Thank you,
Toni Keller
A concerned PA resident

Hello,

I am writing to urge the City of Philadelphia to support and put into law Bill No. 250989 to impose a 36-month moratorium on the breeding, sale, or transfer of any dog under seven months of age within the city of Philadelphia.

The City of Philadelphia is plagued by overcrowded shelters, struggling to maintain enough resources to support the animals in their care. Breeding more dogs into existence further exacerbates the issue, no matter the intentions of the breeder. Unfortunately, there are many irresponsible owners, or humans who fall on hard times and have to give up their animals.

I strongly urge you to support Bill No. 250989. Philadelphia can work to solve the animal overcrowding problem by reducing the number of animals being bred. There is absolutely no reason to breed more dogs in the city of Philadelphia.

Thank you for your consideration,

Molly Babcock

mollymbabcock@gmail.com

1221 Shackamaxon Street, Philadelphia, PA 19125

Bill 250989

From Christina Buckley <buckleys4kids@gmail.com>

Date Mon 2/2/2026 2:39 PM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Good Afternoon Committee Clerk,

Thank you for your time in facilitating this email to get to the Councilmembers that are meeting tomorrow, February 3rd, to discuss bill 250989.

I am submitting my comment, asking the committee to support bill 250989.

Our city has more dogs than we have people to care for the dogs.... that is the bottom line. We need a pause in population and this bill would support that.

My concerns, as a citizen of Philadelphia is of the abundance population of dogs, and that there are unfortunately just not enough people to care for them. We could discuss the fact that stray dogs put people at risk for injury from dog bites due to dogs that are not fed or mother dogs protecting their babies, the spread of disease that comes with stray dogs defecating in public areas that are not cleaned, car accidents with dogs running in the streets, I could go on and on....

My main concern is for the dogs that are suffering (truely suffering) and ultimately, some euthanized due to lack of space, which is due to the dogs being over populated. As a volunteer at the shelter I see emaciated stray dogs being brought in by animal control. The dogs are hungry beyond comprehension. The neglect the stray dogs have withstood is clearly seen in their eyes. They at times come in with wounds on their bodies that are infected from being bitten, they could be in different stages of healing, showing more than one attack. Most stray dogs come in fearful and scared. I've seen all ages, from puppies under 1 year of age, up to seniors. Not only can the shelters not handle the quantity of dogs, the dogs are mentally suffering in the shelter setting. Dogs are not meant to be in small kennels for 23 hours and 45 minutes a day, this is the setting they are in, this is their only option. Many of these dogs are anxious because they are housetrained and there is just not enough staff and volunteer support and meet the needs of the quantity of dogs. Many dogs get sick while in the shelter setting, due to the shelter being overcrowded and the dogs have to further be put in isolation to prevent ongoing spread, which is even more difficult for them. I again could go on and on..... but I'm sure you get the picture.

I trueley thank you for your consideration, Christina Buckley

To the Members of Philadelphia City Council,

My name is Rian Feldman. I am a lifelong Philadelphia resident, currently of Fishtown, and an experienced animal rescuer for the last 15+ years, which includes founding my own 501c3 animal rescue and sanctuary called Uncle Neil's Home in 2019. My time is spent saving animals from overcrowded shelters, organizing emergency foster and adopters for animals in crisis, and responding to urgent calls when there is nowhere else for an animal to go. I have held dogs who were surrendered at just a few months old because they were sick, "too much work," or no longer wanted. I have watched perfectly adoptable dogs deteriorate simply because our shelters are full and our resources are stretched thin. I have seen firsthand what happens when our system is overwhelmed — dogs living in crisis conditions, rescue groups stretched beyond capacity, like my own organization, and animals suffering and being euthanized because there are simply more dogs than there are homes. My phone does not stop ringing and on the other line is always a person begging for help. We are drowning. We need change. This is an emergency.

Bill 250989 is a targeted response to an emergency. It does not ban dog ownership. It does not ban licensed breeders. It does not affect service dog programs or nonprofit rescues. It simply pauses unlicensed breeding and the sale of young dogs in Philadelphia — the pipeline that continues to flood an overwhelmed system. We need this.

Opponents argue this penalizes responsible breeders. But responsible, state-licensed breeders are explicitly exempt. This bill addresses unregulated breeding that produces sick puppies, fuels impulse purchases, and leads directly to surrender and abandonment. This bill prioritizes the dogs already here — the ones waiting in kennels, foster homes, and emergency placements — over producing more dogs we cannot responsibly care for. It lets rescuers like myself make an effective dent in the problem as we're so desperately trying to do.

Others claim this does not address the root cause of overcrowding. But overbreeding *is* a root cause. I see the consequences every week — dogs cycling through shelters, rescues scrambling, and staff forced to make heartbreaking decisions no one should have to make. This bill gives us time. Time for shelters to stabilize. Time for enforcement and education to catch up. Time to prioritize the dogs who already exist and already need us. Time to save lives.

This bill asks us to choose responsibility over convenience and compassion over unchecked production. As someone who sees the fallout up close, I urge City Council to support Bill 250989.

Thank you,

Rian Feldman
Founder and President
Uncle Neil's Home



1255 23rd St. NW, Suite 450
Washington, DC 20037
202-452-1100
humaneworld.org

Formerly called the Humane
Society of the United States and
Humane Society International

Chair, Cindy Bass
Vice-Chair, Mark Squilla
Committee on Rules
Philadelphia City Council
1400 John F. Kennedy Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19107

January 23, 2026

Via Email

Dear Chair Bass, Vice-Chair Squilla and Honorable Members of the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Rules,

On behalf of Humane World for Animals (formerly The Humane Society of the United States), thank you for the opportunity to provide input regarding ordinance proposal 250989, which seeks to amend Title 10 by adding a section to impose a temporary moratorium on the breeding and transfer of puppies. We support the intent of the proposal but would like to share our insights and recommendations. Humane World operates a Pets for Life program in Philadelphia providing pet resources, including spay/neuter services at no cost to pet owners. Over the last 14 years, our team has provided veterinary care and other services to over 40,000 pets in Philadelphia, predominantly in 19140, 19134, 19133, 19132, 19121, 19122, 19120 and 19124. Through our work, we know there are a multitude of barriers that owners face in trying to access spay/neuter services including cost, lack of available appointments/clinics, transportation limitations, language challenges and more. Our approach is to offer spay/neuter for pets at no cost and focus on removing other barriers to access such as providing free transportation to and from spay/neuter appointments.

Pets for Life also engages people in a positive, nonjudgmental way, focusing on building long-term trust. This approach of centering the community's perspective and comprehensively removing barriers has resulted in high sterilization rates of pets served. Of the 7,500 medium and large sized dogs met by Pets for Life in North Philadelphia, 90% were unaltered when we met them and subsequently 75% of those have been spayed or neutered through the program. This highlights that high rates of unaltered pets are due to a lack of access, not opposition to sterilization. Based on our experience in Philadelphia and other cities, we know that increasing sterilization rates is about increasing access to spay/neuter services, not with punitive ordinances and laws. While the proposed ordinance is a moratorium on breeding, in practice it could impact any pet owner who has an intact dog over seven months of age and can't access spay/neuter services in order to ensure an accidental litter does not occur.

Disparities in access to services and resources are often a result of larger systemic issues including affordable and attainable veterinary care. These complex issues are interconnected and while the intention of the proposed ordinance may be educational in nature, the civil fines of up to \$1,000 per violation on a first offense has the ability to further destabilize already vulnerable communities. When municipalities take a broad stroke approach



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to managing all dogs without distinction, rifts between animal service providers and pet owners with limited resources may form which is counterproductive to increasing sterilization rates.

Based on our data¹, the ordinance is likely to apply to approximately 98,170 dogs in Philadelphia who live with families that bring in \$25,000 or less in income each year. This number does not include unaltered dogs living in households that make more than \$25,000 per year but may still face barriers to accessing spay/neuter services. Philadelphia is not alone in facing the ongoing veterinary shortage and Humane World has provided a map (attached) to help illustrate the gap between the ordinance's requirements and the availability of services. If every pet owner with an unaltered dog wanted to spay or neuter their dog to ensure compliance with the proposed ordinance, the 110 veterinary clinics and the few public animal shelter spay/neuter clinics would have to increase their capacity significantly. While the existing spay/neuter organizations are working tirelessly to provide surgical services, it's not realistic for them to take on the volume of need or to address the other common barriers owners face in accessing services.

For most of the households described above, not altering a pet is the result of systemic inequity, not individual responsibility or decision making. Due to a lack of access to veterinary services in historically marginalized communities, our concern is that underserved areas will be disproportionately impacted by the proposed ordinance. This is supported by new research that analyzed a data set of over 1 million companion animal control cases in the United States and showed underserved communities, including communities of color, experience higher rates of animal control enforcement and have outcomes that are more punitive in nature.²

In other cities facing similar issues, we have seen an education first approach which allows for animal services to work with the community to ensure there are available services. The following is an example to codify this approach that we would recommend if the proposed ordinance is considered:

A first violation of this section in any twelve-month period shall be subject to education that will be provided by the agency to ensure:

- *The owner or keeper of an unaltered animal is aware of free or low-cost spay neuter services in their area and the benefits of spay/neuter.*
- *The owner is supported in complying with the requirements of the ordinance, including, but not limited to, providing information on government and non-profit resources that can assist with transportation, housing, finances, and animal care.*

¹ We use U.S. Census data and Humane World's Pets for Life data to determine 1) the likely number of pets in the city, and 2) the likely number of unaltered pets in areas that have access to veterinary care barriers. In Pets for Life markets where there are significant barriers to veterinary care, 88% of pets were unaltered prior to the availability of free spay and neuter and other wellness services, bilingual support, trust building with the community, and transportation services.

² Moss, L. R., O'Reilly, K.M., Hansen, M., Arrington, A., & Morris, K. N. (2025). Demographic Disparities in Animal Law Enforcement: Rates and Outcomes. [Manuscript submitted for publication].



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In addition, we have also seen cities include a provision that adds specific data requirements so that impacts of the ordinance could be objectively measured over time including:

- Quantity of dogs and their owners impacted by the ordinance
- Origin of the intervention (animal services, member of the public, etc.)
- Location of the intervention (street and zip code)
- Intervention outcome (resources, education, fines, pet confiscated)
- Specific resources provided to residents including spay/neuter appointments, transportation assistance, educational materials, etc.

We recognize that tackling the underlying factors contributing to shelter intake is a complex challenge. We know from our experience that focusing on expanding access to spay/neuter and other essential services for Philadelphia pet owners does get at the root cause of the issue. Humane World will continue to invest in North Philadelphia through the Pets for Life program and fully supports efforts by the city to provide funding to ACCT Philly and other local organizations that focus on increasing resources and keeping people and pets together.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We are happy to provide additional information and answer any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Amanda Arrington".

Amanda Arrington
Vice President, Access to Care
Humane World for Animals
aarrington@humaneworld.org

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lindsay Hamrick".

Lindsay Hamrick
Director of Shelter Outreach & Engagement
Humane World for Animals
lhsamrick@humaneworld.org

Philadelphia

**Estimated number of
unaltered pets living in
households making
\$25,000 or less per year
by census tract:**

183,591
(dogs: 98,170)

- **Animal shelter (14)**
- **Veterinarian/health clinic (110)**



Map Created: 12/11/2025
NAD 1983 (2011) StatePlane Pennsylvania South FIPS 3702 (US Feet)
Census data: United States Census Bureau, 2023 5-year estimates



January 27, 2026

Re: Kennel Club of Philadelphia Opposes Bill 250989 as Introduced

Dear Members of the Philadelphia City Council:

I am writing on behalf of the Kennel Club of Philadelphia to ask you to oppose Bill 250989 as currently written, which places a moratorium on dog breeding in Philadelphia.

We share your desire to help dogs, but this proposal will not address your concerns, and will punish responsible owners and breeders such as those in our club. Under Bill 250989 responsible breeders in our club would be stopped, despite their commitment to high standards and transparency, while bad actors would continue to operate outside of the scope of the law.

The Kennel Club of Philadelphia was established in 1878. We demonstrate our joint commitment to celebrating and promoting excellence in canine health and breeding through our prestigious National Dog Show, coverage of which has become a Thanksgiving Day tradition for millions of Americans. Many tune in to watch their favorite breeds, and also to learn more about the dogs, and whether a certain breed may be a good fit for their family.

This show also is a major economic driver for the city, bringing in over 1,700 exhibitors, and over 20,000 spectators from across the country – many of whom are renting hotel rooms, dining in local restaurants, and supporting local Philadelphia businesses, thereby generating millions of dollars into the city's economy every year.

In addition, our club dedicates itself to dogs in the city and the people who love them. For example, our club has donated on a regular basis to:

- University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School Comparative Genetics Lab- \$100,000
- University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School Student Scholarships \$150,000
- Penn Vet Working Dog Center- \$35,000

- Morris Animal Shelter
- Woman's Animal Shelter
- Valley Forge Park Alliance
- Philadoptables
- Greater Philadelphia Search and Rescue

Yet should Bill 250989 become law as written, the city would essentially be punishing our club members and others in kennel clubs in the city who are actually part of the solution to your concerns –responsible, thoughtful dog enthusiasts who commit themselves to breeding and raising high-quality purebred dogs as therapy dogs, service dogs, working dogs, and beloved companions for people in the city and throughout the country. These breeders work tirelessly to support and promote responsible pet ownership in Philadelphia.

This proposal also punishes Philadelphia residents by not allowing them to obtain a dog from a responsible, local purebred dog breeder. This limits the opportunity for families to obtain the right pet for their lifestyle from a local breeder, and potentially forces them to the Internet in order to find the breed of their choice – an option rife with scams and disreputable sources.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to oppose Bill 250989. Should it move forward, then we at least ask the council to consider the following:

- Provide an exemption, such as that in other cities, for those raising and selling a breed approved by and registered with a recognized national breed registry or association which, at a minimum, requires identification of the breed, date of birth, names of registered sire and dam, the name of the breeder and recordkeeping relating to breeding, transfer of ownership.
- Provide an exemption for those breeding dogs for a specific task/function, including service, law enforcement, search and rescue, and public safety/detection.
- Focus on current laws and provide law enforcement authorities with tools and resources protecting all dogs from cruelty or neglect.
- Ensure good data collection to determine where issues are originating and ensure that any laws you pass are providing real solutions to canine issues in the city.
- Require all animals received in the shelter system to be checked for microchips so lost pets don't languish in shelter system taking up valuable space and resources.

- Make sure low-cost spay and neuter funds are available to all who need it and ensure that program availability is widely known through community outreach.
- Consider offering tax credits or other programs to incentivize greater acceptance of pets in residential housing to address issue of pets ending up in shelter system only because of housing issues.

This bill risks shutting down programs that prioritize dogs' welfare, limiting the opportunity for local residents to obtain a healthy pet for their family, and restricting the ability of our club to continue to celebrate and promote healthy, exceptionally-bred dogs.

Thank you for your time and for considering the impact of this proposal on responsible breeders, dog owners, and families in our community. The Kennel Club of Philadelphia and the American Kennel Club welcome the opportunity to work with you on more effective, positive solutions to make a difference for dogs and the City of Philadelphia.

Sincerely,

A rectangular area containing a handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Wayne Ferguson".

President, Kennel Club of Philadelphia

Concerns with upcoming breeder bill

From Tamar Paltin <tamar@lovebarkphilly.com>

Date Sun 1/18/2026 1:41 PM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong concern regarding Bill No. 250989. While I share the goal of reducing shelter overcrowding and improving animal welfare in our city, this legislation does not meaningfully address the underlying causes of these challenges. Instead, it places a disproportionate burden on responsible hobby breeders, including small-scale, American Kennel Club–affiliated breeders who already operate with high standards of care and accountability.

As a responsible hobby breeder, I take extensive measures to ensure the health, welfare, and lifelong placement of the dogs I produce. This includes comprehensive health testing, thoughtful breeding practices, proper socialization, and contractual safeguards to ensure that any dog I breed will never enter the city’s shelter system. Policies that restrict or penalize breeders who are already part of the solution do not address the real sources of shelter crowding in our community.

Shelter overpopulation is driven by systemic barriers faced by pet owners—particularly access to affordable veterinary care, education, and basic resources. If the goal of this legislation is to reduce intake at city shelters, more effective and equitable approaches would include expanded free or low-cost spay and neuter clinics, pet food and preventative care pantries without excessive limitations, and sustained public education on responsible pet ownership, breeding, and rehoming. These strategies address the root causes of surrender and overbreeding rather than placing additional restrictions on those who are already acting responsibly.

Although Bill No. 250989 includes limited exemptions, it would still significantly restrict ethical, small-scale breeders while failing to curb irresponsible breeding practices or reduce shelter intake in a meaningful way. I urge the Committee to reconsider this approach and instead pursue policies that directly support pet owners, strengthen community resources, and target the true drivers of animal homelessness in our city.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Tamar

Tamar Paltin Mayer
MS, CPDT-KA, FFCP, CCUI
B&B Therapy Dog Evaluator
AKC Judge and Evaluator

Please excuse any typos. Sent from my iPhone.

opposition to bill 250989

From MICHAEL DALY JR <md11724@comcast.net>

Date Wed 1/28/2026 6:07 PM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

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Hi Whitney I OPPOSE BILL 250989 it will hurt good breeders that do all test screen puppy buyers and at always there for the buyers we take back or dogs so they don't end up in shelters I show and field train my dogs have a litter once every few years my last litter was two and a half years ago the puppy that I keep is my future if all goes as hoped that pup has to clear all test before she is bred we chip are dogs before they go to there forever homes if I can't breed I have no future the shelters are always full because they import the dogs from around the USA and world not all rescues are good I don't know the answer but maybe if all puppies had to be chipped you would find out who doing what the dogs running the street would be chipped so you know who owns it make it more expensive for the backyard breeders some way health test genetic test chip at pups after all they only want the money once the puppy out the door that is all they care about but you should not hurt the good breeders we are not all alike thank you for your time Mike Daly my phone number is 215 824 0822 if you have any questions my zip code is 19154



Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity
C.A.R.E.
420 Dunkirk Rd
Baltimore MD 21212

January 30, 2026

Sent via email to the Rules Committee

Chair Cindy Bass

cindy.bass@phila.gov

Vice Chair Mark Squilla

mark.squilla@phila.gov

Katherine Gilmore Richardson

katherine.gilmore.richardson@phila.gov

Curtis Jones, Jr.

curtis.jones@phila.gov

Isaiah Thomas

isaiah.thomas@phila.gov

Dear Members of the Rules Committee,

On behalf of Companions and Animals for Reform and Equity (CARE) and the numerous Philadelphia families with pets it supports, I respectfully urge you to oppose Bill No. 250909. Although well-intentioned, the passage and enforcement of this bill are unlikely to address intake issues in the City of Philadelphia and may worsen the crisis while harming the community. Below, we outline the following concerns and suggestions:

1. **Current evidence suggests that the provisions of this bill may worsen, not improve, the shelter intake crisis.** Increased shelter intake is a nationwide problem. Philadelphia is certainly not the only major metropolitan area facing an intake crisis. If this bill passes, however, Philadelphia may be the only jurisdiction to attempt to resolve the issue by a legislative approach as heavy-handed as this bill.¹ For decades, cities have experimented with various models to address overpopulation, only to see those attempts fail. Methods that truly focus on collaboration and are tailored to the needs of the community have proven far more effective than punitive approaches.² Though it has

¹ To date, we are not aware of any other jurisdiction that has passed or is attempting to pass a moratorium as far-reaching as the current bill.

² While this bill is not a mandatory spay neuter bill in name, its provisions align with the spirit of such laws that have been abandoned or discouraged due to lack of effectiveness (see, for example just one of many



been brought to our attention that proponents of this bill intend to redouble their efforts to assist low-income areas after its passage, we believe that practical outcomes occur when those communities (and those of us dedicated to supporting them) are engaged at every step of the process and treated as partners.

Unfortunately, the main proponents of this bill have dismissed what has been proven to work when properly implemented in other communities as “baby steps.”³ At the same time, in a more recent communication, the executive director of ACCT Philly appeared to indicate that these “baby steps” in the form of affordable spay/neuter services could indeed be effective, if only more funding were available to expand their reach.⁴ If the revenue from monetary penalties will support these programs, this fact has not been made transparent in the legislation. Even so, there are more effective, narrowly tailored, and humane ways to raise funds for much-needed spay/neuter programs.

2. The bill goes far beyond targeting “backyard breeders” and instead punishes ordinary pet owners and consumers. To name only a few examples, the bill:

- Subjects violators to disproportionately high penalties for animal-related violations. Given that each violation carries a \$ 1,000- \$ 2,000 fine, if the birth of each puppy in a litter counts as a violation, these penalties may far exceed current penalties for criminal animal cruelty.
- Unfairly shifts the burden from exempted/licensed sellers to uninformed and unlicensed consumers to obtain the required license numbers at the time of purchase, in the face of severe penalties for failure to do so. Such a provision undermines due process and threatens other important consumer protections.
- Requires the reporting of enforcement against violators, but not the reporting of successful interventions in lieu of punishment.
- Fails to distinguish between incidental/infrequent breeders and higher volume breeders.
- Fails to establish a rational basis for adopting such punitive measures against citizens.⁵

jurisdictions that have repealed legislation to address population concerns through punitive from monetary penalties will be used from fines will measures):

<https://www.jacksonsun.com/story/news/local/2020/07/07/jackson-city-council-vote-repealing-spay-neuter-mandate/5383425002/>). Moreover, like this example, the bill is at risk of being arbitrarily enforced due to the reality that the regulated behavior can be extremely difficult to track. Rather than subjecting residents to thousands of dollars or fines for owning puppies, the shelter may achieve desired results by searching for ways to add, improve and incentivize the use of free and low cost services.

³<https://acctphilly.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Philadelphia-Puppy-Breeding-and-Sales-Pause-FAQ.pdf>

⁴ See enclosed email from ACCT Philly Executive Director, Sarah Barnett.

⁵ While we have not been provided a copy of the full study, media reports indicated that this bill was introduced in response to a donor-funded survey of a select sample of a single breed at the shelter with a DNA overlap of nearly 50%. Yet such a high percentage would seem to indicate that the problem is with



- 3. This bill erodes community trust and may discourage residents from using services that help reduce relinquishments and overcrowding.** CARE works alongside neighborhood leaders in Philadelphia to effectively reduce the number of animals entering shelters through community-centered services. Our programs have prevented countless shelter intakes. Yet much work remains to improve relations between communities and shelters. Should this bill pass, we are concerned that those most in need of services will be among the most hesitant to seek them.

While we are encouraged to hear that the sponsors' intent is not to punish citizens, we are concerned that the bill's language offers no such assurance. We would always prefer that shelters exhaust all other interventions, including conducting independent audits of their current programs to identify steps for improvement in intake management. Forced compliance has not been shown to be an effective method for addressing overpopulation. Should this bill proceed, however, we would suggest the following amendments, at a minimum:

- A waiver of penalty for good cause, including but not limited to accidental litters, extraordinary circumstances, and the willingness to voluntarily engage in initiatives aimed at reducing the shelter population.
- A waiver of penalty for those seeking in good faith services for dogs and puppies, including but not limited to vaccination, licensing, and voluntary surrender.
- A warning for first-time violators in lieu of a penalty. Such a provision would educate and help ensure focus on breeders whose litter sizes may truly affect shelter numbers.
- Provisions that better protect, rather than punish, consumers in their good-faith transactions, in alignment with the bill's consumer protection finding.
- Provisions that provide transparency and accountability on the intended use of revenue from fines.
- Any other amendments that provide for opportunities and incentives for compliance in lieu of punishment.

Effectively addressing the intake crisis requires the effort of an entire community. If passed, this bill will only exacerbate the divide between the sheltering system and the community it serves, while undermining the goal of reducing shelter intake numbers. Again, we urge the City Council not to advance this bill. I have enclosed a more detailed statement outlining our position on the breeding moratorium.

Sincerely,

a small number of breeders in the community. To this end, we would encourage better data-collection practices to identify the actual sources of shelter overpopulation before passing the blame onto individuals who have may have no bearing on these numbers.



James Evans, CEO
CARE

Cc:
Legislative Director Whitney Brown
whitney.brown@phila.gov

Enclosure

Dear Members of the Philadelphia City Council Rules Committee:

I am a responsible dog owner/occasional breeder, and member of the Butler County Kennel Club of PA, Collie Club of Western PA, and a member of the Collie Club of America. I am writing to ask you to oppose Bill 250989 as currently written, which places a moratorium on breeding in Philadelphia.

I share the desire to help dogs, but this proposal will not address your concerns. Instead, it will punish responsible owners and breeders like me.

If Bill 250989 passes, it would prevent Philadelphia residents from continuing their thoughtful and responsible breeding program despite their commitment to high standards and transparency, while irresponsible actors will simply continue to operate outside of the scope of the law.

I respectfully ask that you consider my recommendations below, or at least consider exemptions for responsible, humane breeders like myself.

I breed Rough Collies in a responsible, carefully managed program, producing a litter every few years in conjunction with my mentors, working together to ensure we breed responsibly. We participate in many AKC sponsored events, as well as Therapy, and some of just very happy pets. Our dogs are health-tested, raised in clean, humane conditions, and receive appropriate socialization and veterinary care. I remain responsible for every puppy I produce throughout its lifetime, including supporting owners and taking dogs back if needed. I am proud to provide residents of Philadelphia and the surrounding area with high-quality, healthy dogs.

99% of the time the dogs that end up in shelters are not pure bred dogs with papers, they are dogs from puppy-mills and backyard breeders who do not register their dogs, breed mixed breed dogs for fighting, etc. And they will continue to breed under cover because they do not register their dogs or do any health testing, etc.

Please oppose Bill 250989 and instead support targeted, enforceable measures that:

- Focus on current laws and provide law enforcement authorities with tools and resources protecting all dogs from cruelty or neglect
- Ensure good data collection to determine where issues are originating and ensure any laws passed are addressing actual concerns in the city
- Require all animals received in the shelter system to be checked for microchips so lost pets don't languish in shelter system taking up valuable space and resources.

- Make sure low-cost spay and neuter funds are available to all who need it and ensure that program availability is widely known through community outreach.
- Consider offering tax credits or other programs to incentivize greater acceptance of pets in residential housing to address issue of pets ending up in shelter system only because of housing issues.

This bill could end programs that support dog welfare and reduce residents' access to healthy pets. People that want specific breeds or dogs for specific purposes, aren't going to shelters to get those dogs, they'll just travel further to get the dog they want or buy from underground facilities not abiding by laws.

Thank you for your time and for considering the impact of this proposal on responsible breeders, dog owners, and families in our community. Please do not hesitate to contact me at heather.donley@gmail.com if you have questions or I may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Heather Donely

Twilight Collies

Pittsburgh, PA

Heather.Donley@gmail.com / 412-427-4849



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

City of Philadelphia City Council
Committee on Rules – Testimony

Re: Opposition to Bill No. 250989 – Temporary Moratorium on the Sale and Transfer of Puppies

Dear Chair Bass and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the American Kennel Club (AKC) and the numerous responsible dog owners and breeders in the City of Philadelphia. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in opposition to Bill 250989, the proposed three-year moratorium on breeding and transferring puppies in Philadelphia.

The AKC cares deeply about animal welfare and public safety and strongly supports the goals of stopping neglect, abuse, and irresponsible breeding. However, this bill unfortunately does not target the real problem. Instead, it applies a broad ban where focused enforcement is needed, and will create unintended harm for responsible breeders, consumers, and even dogs themselves.

The structure of this bill is inconsistent and difficult to enforce. The bill exempts licensed breeding kennels, but according to supporters, Philadelphia currently has no licensed breeding kennels. This is because responsible hobby breeders simply do not keep or transfer the number of dogs (**twenty-six**) requiring a state license. In fact, many only have one planned litter of puppies a year and often have a waiting list of folks waiting to take them home once they reach the legal age at which they can be transferred. If responsible breeders are not materially contributing to shelter overcrowding, exempting them would not increase shelter populations. But forcing them into a three-year shutdown can permanently destroy bloodlines, genetic diversity, and programs that took decades to build.

It should also be noted that these hobbyists raise dogs in their private homes, and the inspections and requirements are designed for those producing a larger number of dogs. As a result, it's not reasonable to expect these home-based hobbyists to simply register for a state license, as not all the requirements (for example the size of outdoor areas) would be possible for someone breeding one litter in their home in Philadelphia city limits.

Responsible breeders are models for their communities. They raise healthy dogs and work to ensure that puppies are placed with appropriate owners, even agreeing to take dogs back if a home does not work out, instead of placing them in a shelter. These breeders are in a unique position to support new pet owners and teach them to be responsible dog owners.

Breeders have worked for decades to establish quality breeding programs that produce well-bred, healthy dogs. We encourage you to not punish responsible breeders who have been providing quality, well-bred pets to the community for many years.

ACCT Philly has shared that shelter intake has increased and that donor-funded DNA testing of about 60 huskies showed many were closely related. That evidence points to a localized problem —not a citywide failure of responsible breeders. If specific operations are producing a disproportionate number of shelter dogs, the solution is targeted investigation and enforcement, not shutting down everyone else.

ACCT also reports a 45 percent increase in puppy intake from 2023 to 2024, but no data shows how many of those puppies were bred in Philadelphia versus surrendered due to housing instability, illness, financial hardship, or import activity. Correlation alone is not causation, and policy should be based on

precise local data.

If backyard breeders are surrendering sick or unsold dogs, they should be cited for abandonment, neglect, or consumer fraud under existing law. Pennsylvania already has cruelty statutes, licensing requirements, and inspection authority. The problem is not lack of laws — it is lack of targeted enforcement.

Moratoriums also push irresponsible breeders and sellers underground. People will not stop wanting dogs because Philadelphia pauses breeding, and not every person wanting a dog decides that a shelter or rescue dog is right for their family. Instead, they will simply go elsewhere — and those breaking current laws and breeding in an inhumane manner will likely continue to do so, resulting in reduced transparency which ultimately harms animal welfare and opens consumers to scams.

Again, the AKC strongly supports your goals of lowering the shelter population and promoting the humane care of animals. Instead of a breeding moratorium, Philadelphia should instead focus on targeted investigations based on complaints, penalties for abandonment and neglect, specific actions for buyer education, and responsible sterilization programs.

Bill 250989 is well-intentioned, but it misapplies ACCT data, punishes responsible breeders and Philadelphia residents seeking a healthy, well-bred dog from a local breeder, and risks worsening the very problem it seeks to fix.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charley Hall". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Charley Hall
Mid-Atlantic Region Manager
Government Relations

Pennsylvania Federation of Dog Clubs

Chairperson Bass, and the Committee on Rules; thank you for the opportunity to comment on Bill 250989.

My name is Jonathan Stanley, and I am a member of the board of the Pennsylvania Federation of Dog Clubs. Specifically, I have been the 1st Vice Chair of the Legislative committee for the past 6 years.

I am here today representing dog clubs, competitors and training groups across the Commonwealth who organize around numerous Dog sports. These include thousands of Pennsylvania citizens who participate in:

- Conformation dog shows,
- Performance Sports such as Agility
- Companion events such as Obedience and Rally
- Tracking
- Scent work
- Herding
- Lure Coursing
- Coursing Ability Tests such as CAT and Fast CAT
- Hunt Tests
- Field Trials
- Trick Dog and
- Basic obedience evaluation such as Canine Good Citizen certification.

For example, 2 of our member clubs are the Hatboro Dog Club and the Huntingdon Valley Kennel Club, of which, members reside in the City of Philadelphia. Both clubs sent letters to all the council members concerning this proposed bill.

Our organization has internal calculations that estimate the economic impact of Dog sports in Pennsylvania at between 200 million to 350 million dollars a year in economic stimulus to the Commonwealth.

A broad sweeping ban on breeding or transfers of any dog under 7 months of age would have substantial economic impact not only on sports as a whole but on individuals who live in Philadelphia and who are hobby professionals. Many of these hobby professionals are likely to responsibly have a litter or two of puppies in any given year. They do this to continue their competition program and also to provide high caliber dogs to families or individuals who either compete or who want a pet with specific traits representing the breed or type of dog.

Pennsylvania Federation of Dog Clubs

Contrary to prevailing opinion, there are many more responsible breeders than those who are not, and this broad sweeping ban of three years, to be renewed at the sole discretion of the City Council would devastate the good and do little to prevent the bad. For example, do we even know what percentage of dogs held at any time by ACCT Philly come from outside the city as opposed to being bred and then turned out onto the streets from within the city? The Pennsylvania Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement, whom we regularly work with, inspects 60 licensees (including Shelters and Rescues) in the city of Philadelphia, but people in dog sports who have a litter or two a year are not required under PA law to have a kennel license, so it is difficult to nearly impossible to estimate the number of responsible breeders who would be unfairly and negatively affected by this broad ban.

As the Pa Federation of Dog Clubs, we have further concerns on the definition of *bona fide* credentials involving the raising of seeing eye dogs, therapy and law enforcement dogs and the potential that some won't be supplied if they can't be transferred until 7 months.

While we are supportive of the work that many shelters and rescues perform, they do not contribute to the economy. The PFDC is concerned at yet another broad bill proposing constraints on everyone in the industry except for rescues and shelters. Shelters and rescues actively compete in dog distribution and trafficking networks for puppies, because they are quick to bring adoption revenue through fees while bringing people into shelters to potentially adopt older dogs. While this is important work, an adopted dog from a shelter has a greater risk of recidivism back into a shelter than a puppy purchased from a responsible breeder. Most responsible breeders write in their contracts that dogs must be returned to them rather than dropped at a shelter.

The Pennsylvania Federation of Dog Clubs respectfully requests that the Council consult with responsible breeders and dog owners who come from a perspective of animal welfare rather than animal rights activists. These same activists are part of a broader agenda led by PETA the HSUS and the ASPCA whose budgets go primarily to legislation. Their objectives always include denigrating responsible breeders while promoting and exempting shelters and rescues.

Pennsylvania Federation of Dog Clubs

We believe this bill represents an important need and a good motive, but it does not address the root concerns that cause dogs to be abandoned or turned over to shelters. We are available to consult constructively on writing legislation that would help address these core issues.

Thank you for listening to our comments.

Jonathan Stanley

Legislative vice-chair

The Pennsylvania Federation of Dog Clubs.



Outlook

Dog breeding

From No place Like home <nplhworkcell@gmail.com>

Date Tue 2/3/2026 8:22 AM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear councilwoman, and committee,

I am writing in support of the dog breeding ban, being presented in Philadelphia. This ban presents an expansive set of benefits, in a city that is struggling with dog overpopulation, dog fighting, abuse and neglect cases. We hope you continue to show your support as well!

A. HOUSER

Testimony for Popo- In Support of Bass Legislation Bill 250989

From Tess Fruchtman <tessfruchtman@gmail.com>

Date Tue 2/3/2026 2:42 PM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Hello,

I am writing to submit public testimony to be shared with committee members regarding Bill 2500989 to ask for their support of this bill.

"I am doing this to honor and remember my very first foster dog, Popo. Popo came into ACCT Philly as a stray in January 2025. I met him my first day volunteering there and knew he was a very special dog. When he became timestamped solely for length of stay and a lack of space, I jumped in to take him home and foster him.

Popo walked into ACCT with bite wounds on his face, underweight, and assumed neurological issues resulting in hind limb gait irregularities. His front paws were outturned and he could not jump onto surfaces well within his reach. He was visibly uncomfortable. He was the result of unethical breeding.

Popo was the best dog I've ever cared for. Despite his health challenges that ultimately resulted in behavioral challenges, he was the most loving being I've ever known. He deserved so much more than a life of discomfort both physically and possibly mentally at the hands of breeding with no regards for health and longevity.

I've continued fostering in honor of Popo and am an active volunteer at ACCT Philly. I have now had multiple foster dogs with these physical abnormalities that are visibly uncomfortable and will lead to long term orthopedic issues. Everyday I hear about the growing numbers of dogs entering the shelter system.

I ask that you please support Bill 250989 for dogs like Popo."

Best,

Tess Fruchtman

Bill 250989

From Marcelina Patterson <marcelina@acctphilly.org>

Date Tue 2/3/2026 1:37 PM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Hello,

I am submitting this written comment on Bill 250989 for the committee to support this bill. This bill would greatly improve the lives of animals and the staff that work at overcrowded shelters like the one I work at, ACCT Philly. Having to keep and raise litters of puppies until they are 7 months old could force quick sell backyard breeders to stop entirely and lessen our shelter population. I have witnessed several litters of puppies under 7 months in the most horrible states of abuse. I have had to euthanize a litter of sick puppies because of backyard breeders. They do not have cleaning or vaccination standards and diseases do not leave their home, which continues to infect every litter they produce. Bill 250989 could save hundreds of puppies from meeting the same fate of pain and suffering, as well as the shelter staff that are deeply and emotionally affected by irresponsible backyard breeders, like myself.

Thank you so much for considering passing this bill,
Marcelina Patterson, Philadelphia 19134

Philadelphia City Council Rules Committee - Bill 250989

From Jennifer Rhyshek <jarhyshek@yahoo.com>

Date Tue 2/3/2026 9:45 AM

To Whitney Brown <Whitney.Brown@phila.gov>

Cc Jennifer Rhyshek <jarhyshek@yahoo.com>; Cindy Bass <Cindy.Bass@Phila.gov>; Mark Squilla <Mark.Squilla@Phila.gov>; Katherine Gilmore Richardson <Katherine.Gilmore.Richardson@phila.gov>; Curtis Jones Jr <Curtis.Jones.Jr@phila.gov>; Brian O'Neill <Brian.ONeill@phila.gov>; Isaiah Thomas <Isaiah.Thomas@phila.gov>; Jamie Gauthier <Jamie.Gauthier@phila.gov>

External Email Notice. This email comes from outside of City government. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender.

Dear Members of the Philadelphia City Council Rules Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Delaware County Kennel Club to ask you to oppose Bill 250989 as currently written, which places a moratorium on dog breeding in Philadelphia.

We share your commitment to helping dogs, but this proposal will not address your concerns, and will punish responsible owners and breeders such as those who are members of our club. If Bill 250989 passes, responsible breeders in our club would be stopped, despite their commitment to high standards and transparency, while bad actors would continue to operate outside of the scope of the law.

Delaware County Kennel Club respectfully asks that you consider our recommendations below, or at least consider exemptions for responsible, humane breeders like those in our kennel club.

The Delaware County Kennel Club has been in existence for 100 years. We hold many events throughout the year ranging from agility to conformation shows, microchip clinics, dog licensing drives, responsible dog ownership seminars, and grooming and first aid demonstrations. We reach thousands of dog owners with these various events, both local and distant. We've had dog owners travel from Canada and New England, as well as the mid-west and Florida, and every state in between to attend our various events.

The Delaware County Kennel Club is proactive in supporting the community. We hold FREE microchip clinics and supply local police departments with microchip scanners so stray dogs can be united with their owners as fast as possible, sometimes avoiding the hold at the nearest shelter.

Additionally, DCKC has outfitted 47 local K-9 officers with bullet and stab proof vests, canine first aid kits, and doggie oxygen masks. We also make annual donations of thousands of dollars to between 3 and 5 local dog related charities, such as Penn Working Dog Center, Canine Warriors, and Canine Partners for Life.

The Delaware County Kennel Club is comprised of dog enthusiasts, including several reputable pure-bred breeders. They have high breeding standards and produce impeccable results. Several of our breeders have received the AKC's Breeder of Merit award. Our responsible breeders perform DNA testing, OFA testing of hips and elbows, cardiac testing, and eye Cerfs. As well as puppy temperament testing before selectively placing them in homes. Puppies are

sold under contracts, typically with health guarantees and return policies, that ensure that dogs do not end up in shelters.

Please oppose Bill 250989 instead support targeted, enforceable measures that:

- Focus on current laws and provide law enforcement authorities with tools and resources protecting all dogs from cruelty or neglect
- Ensure good data collection to determine where issues are originating and ensure any laws you pass are addressing actual concerns in the city
- Require all animals received in the shelter system to be checked for microchips so lost pets don't languish in shelter system taking up valuable space and resources.
- Make sure low-cost spay and neuter funds are available to all who need it and ensure that program availability is widely known through community outreach.
- Consider offering tax credits or other programs to incentivize greater acceptance of pets in residential housing to address issue of pets ending up in shelter system only because of housing issues.

This bill risks shutting down programs that prioritize dogs' welfare, and limiting the opportunity for local residents to obtain a healthy pet for their family.

Thank you for your time and for considering the impact of this proposal on responsible breeders, dog owners, and families in our community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or I may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Rhyshek
DCKC Treasurer
DCKC Agility Trial Chairman
215-264-1776/jarhyshek@yahoo.com