

25th May 2022

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill.

The UK has long led the way on animal welfare. Ministers are committed to enhancing our world-leading standards with ambitious reforms, as outlined in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare. The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill will introduce some landmark protections for pets, livestock and kept wild animals. I look forward to supporting the Bill through its Parliamentary passage.

Live animals can suffer distress and injury during excessively long export journeys. EU rules prevented any changes to these journeys, but the UK Government is now able to ban the export of live animals for slaughter and fattening. This Bill will ensure that the UK is the first European country to end this practice.

Primates are highly intelligent, complex animals that require specialist care. Through the Bill, the Government will meet its Manifesto commitment to ban keeping primates as pets, creating a rigorous licensing scheme to ensure higher protections for all primates kept privately in England. The Bill will update the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 to improve enforcement and strengthen conservation requirements for zoos.

The Bill will also tackle puppy smuggling by reducing the number of pets, including dogs, cats and ferrets permitted to travel. The Bill enables the Environment Secretary to regulate the importation of cats, dogs and ferrets for the purpose of promoting their welfare. Further restrictions could include raising the minimum age that pets can travel into Great Britain and banning the import of dogs with mutilations such as cropped ears and docked tails. The Bill will introduce a new pet abduction offence to reflect the value that we all place on our pets.

I am aware that the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill has been carried over into the new Parliamentary session and will return to the House as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP