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Dog Ear Cropping:

I share concerns about this issue. The 621% increase in reports to the RSPCA of ear cropping since 2015 is horrifying. This trend causes pain and a risk of infection to dogs and often takes place alongside other forms of animal abuse and mistreatment. These practices are already illegal in the UK under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

I also consider it essential to call out people who put images of cropped dogs on social media platforms for likes, shares and followers, ignoring pain that dog endures.

I was extremely disappointed the Government dropped the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill. Over 18 months had passed since the Bill was scrutinised by Parliament and reassurances were given that it would be returned for further debate. This decision was a profound setback for animal welfare. This legislation would have allowed for regulations to restrict the import of dogs on welfare grounds, including the possibility of banning the import of dogs with cropped ears or docked tails.

I am aware of the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill, a Private Members' Bill due for its Second Reading stage debate on 15 March 2024. This legislation is concerned with measures relating to restrictions on the importation and non-commercial movement of dogs, cats and ferrets.

The sponsoring Member of Parliament, Selaine Saxby MP, has said the Bill would ban young sick puppies and kittens coming into the country, young animals being taken away from their mothers too soon and the import of heavily pregnant dogs and cats. A draft version of this Bill has not been published. I will follow developments on this closely.

In August 2021, the Government launched a consultation on changes to rules for importing dogs. This closed on 16 October 2021. No response or feedback has been published.

All animals deserve protection. Strengthening our animal welfare laws is a priority and I will always support action to achieve this. I believe it is wrong to promise tougher legislation if promises are then not seen through.

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