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### **Puppy Smuggling:**

I want to see the highest level of care for pets. My sympathies go out to anyone who sadly has been affected by the cruel practices of puppy farming and smuggling. I support taking increased measures to tackle puppy smuggling.

Every year, thousands of puppies are illegally imported into the UK to be sold to unsuspecting dog lovers, having been transported thousands of miles with little or no food, water or exercise. I am concerned there is widespread abuse of the pet travel scheme, by which animals are smuggled illegally often underage, unvaccinated and in poor welfare conditions.

I was extremely disappointed the Government dropped the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill. This decision was a profound setback for animal welfare.

This legislation would have allowed for regulations to restrict the import of dogs, including the possibility of banning the import of dogs with mutilations.

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.

I believe there should be strict limits on the number of animals being brought into the country in non-commercial vehicles as well as a six-month age limit for those being imported. In my view we must also increase minimum penalties for those who illegally import dogs.

In 2021, the Government held a consultation on proposals to increase the minimum import age for dogs, to ban the movement of dogs who have been subjected to mutilations, and to ban the movement of dogs more than 42 days pregnant. It continues to analyse feedback to this consultation.

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