Selaine Saxby PMB Media Coverage

1. **Ministers set to back fresh bid for puppy smuggling crackdown.**

Publication - The Independent

By Nina Lloyd, Friday 15th March 2024

Link to article – <https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/government-penny-mordaunt-mps-b2513180.html>

Article - Ministers are expected to back a fresh bid to crack down on puppy smuggling after MPs urged the Government to reveal how it will fulfil a series of promises to bolster animal welfare.

Tory MP Selaine Saxby’s proposed legislation would ban dogs and cats under six months from being brought into the UK.

It would also prohibit the importation of heavily pregnant animals and those with mutilations, such as cropped ears or a docked tail.

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill goes before MPs on Friday. The Government is set to throw its support behind the measures, it is understood.

The proposals, which come in a private member’s bill, will also limit the number of pets a person can travel with.

It comes after the Government came under pressure from Tory MPs following the decision to scrap its own planned legislation last May.

The Bill had been expected to have cracked down on puppy smuggling, banned live animal exports for fattening and slaughter, and helped to tackle pet abduction and livestock worrying, among other changes.

Commons Leader Penny Mordaunt said last year her colleagues “should be reassured” that the Government still plans to fulfil its pledges.

1. **Proposals to crack down on puppy smuggling clear first commons hurdle.**

Publication: The Independent

By Rhiannon James and David Lynch, PA Political Staff.

Link to article: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/conservative-therese-coffey-government-bill-cats-b2513335.html>

Article: Proposals to crack down on the ``unscrupulous'' commercial trade of puppy, kitten and ferret smuggling have cleared their first hurdle in the Commons.

Conservative MP Selaine Saxby said the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill will ensure that pets are not sold or traded as objects.

The Private Member's Bill, which has the backing of Government, proposes to ban dogs and cats under six months from being brought into the UK.

It also prohibits the importation of heavily pregnant animals and those with mutilations, such as cropped ears or a docked tail.

Ministers also heard during the debate that Disney Pixar films such as Up and celebrity culture are normalising ear cropping in dogs, from Conservative MP Neil Hudson.

Opening the Bill's second reading debate, Ms Saxby said: ``As a dog owner myself, it is horrific to hear stories of puppies and kittens being smuggled across the border and the poor conditions they have to endure.

``Pets are more than just property, they are family, and the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill will ensure that pets are not sold or traded as objects.''

The North Devon MP added: ``This Bill will deliver a manifesto commitment to crack down on puppy, kitten and ferret smuggling by closing loopholes exploited by unscrupulous commercial trading.''

Conservative former environment secretary Therese Coffey gave her backing to the Bill, but urged the Government to ensure its measures are rolled out swiftly.

She raised concerns that new rules on limiting the number of pets a person can travel with would not come into force as soon as the Bill passes into law.

``I appreciate there might be transition but at the moment it says six months,'' the Suffolk Coastal MP said.

Elsewhere, Mr Hudson, a vet and the Tory MP for Penrith and The Border, said the portrayal of ear-cropped dogs in children's films is wrong.

He said: ``We've got to have a look at popular culture as well, if you look at the popular animated films - one of my favourite films that I watch with my children was the Disney Pixar film Up, which we all absolutely love.

``But if you look really closely at the dogs in that film, many of them are cropped. And so if people are going to the cinema with their kids, and seeing this on the big screen, that looks normal and that is wrong.

Equally so, in the last couple of years there was another hugely successful animated film, The Super Pets film, again the lead character was an ear-cropped dog.

``Now a lot of people then, in our country, they love their animals but they don't realise that ear cropping is not normal and so they want to have those dogs, and unfortunately there is a popular culture, a celebrity culture, as well.

``So we need to educate people that these dogs have been horrifically mutilated. So this law, when it comes in, will really close that loophole down.''

Ms Saxby told MPs that despite not receiving ``strong representations'' from the ferret community, they are included in the Bill because ferrets are in the same category as dogs and cats when it comes to the risk of rabies.

Labour MP for Chester Samantha Dixon joked that the Commons had not discussed ferrets enough in the current Parliament as she spoke in support of the Bill.

She told MPs: ``I thought I would take the opportunity as it hasn't been taken many times during this session of Parliament to actually talk about ferrets a little more, because obviously with the exception of the Member for Banbury (Victoria Prentis) I don't think we have talked about ferrets in this place at all, maybe talking more likely about reverse ferrets than actual ferrets.''

During the debate it was revealed that Attorney General Ms Prentis previously had a pet ferret called Roulette.

Environment minister Mark Spencer confirmed the Government would be backing the Bill, telling the Commons: ``I would like to thank (Ms Saxby) again for taking forward this important Bill, and look forward to seeing it progress through the remaining stages in the House and in the other place (House of Lords).''

MPs will continue scrutiny of the Bill at a later date.

1. **Disney, Pixar and Warner Bros accused of ‘normalising’ procedure that leaves dogs ‘horrifically mutilated’ by featuring disfigured animals in films like Up and DC’s League of Super Pets – as MP’s make a fresh bid to crack down on puppy smuggling.**

Publication: MailOnline

By David Wilcock, Deputy Political Editor for Mailonline

Link to article: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13201379/Disney-Pixar-Warner-Bros-accused-normalising-ear-cropping.html>

Article: Disney, its animation subsidiary Pixar and fellow film giant Warner Brothers have been accused of 'normalising' the mutilation of dogs by featuring disfigured animals in films.

MP and vet Dr Neil Hudson took aim at films such as Up and DC's League of Super Pets for featuring dogs with cropped ears.

The procedure that is illegal in England and Wales but cropped dogs can still be imported from countries where it is legal, including the US.

The procedure has become more popular, with celebrities including Kendall Jenner owning Dobermans with ears that have been cut away so they stand up straight.

Pixar's Up features a Doberman called Alpha with cropped - or docked - ears that stick up tall instead of flapping down naturally. Additionally, Super Pets features a dog called Ace, voiced by Kevin Hart, who is a crop-eared sidekick to Batman.

The criticism came as MPs debated a fresh bid to crack down on puppy smuggling. Tory MP Selaine Saxby's proposed legislation would ban cropped dogs from being brought into the UK.

Dr Hudson, the MP for Penrith and The Border, said: 'We've got to have a look at popular culture as well, if you look at the popular animated films - one of my favourite films that I watch with my children was the Disney Pixar film Up, which we all absolutely love.

'But if you look really closely at the dogs in that film, many of them are cropped. And so if people are going to the cinema with their kids, and seeing this on the big screen, that looks normal and that is wrong.

'Equally so, in the last couple of years there was another hugely successful animated film, The Super Pets film, again the lead character was an ear-cropped dog.

'Now a lot of people then, in our country, they love their animals but they don't realise that ear cropping is not normal and so they want to have those dogs, and unfortunately there is a popular culture, a celebrity culture, as well.

'So we need to educate people that these dogs have been horrifically mutilated. So this law, when it comes in, will really close that loophole down.'

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill went before MPs this morning. The Government is set to throw its support behind the measures, it is understood.

It aims to ban dogs and cats under six months from being brought into the UK. It would also prohibit the importation of heavily pregnant animals.

The proposals, which come in a private member's bill, will also limit the number of pets a person can travel with.

It comes after the Government came under pressure from Tory MPs following the decision to scrap its own planned legislation last May.

The Bill had been expected to have cracked down on puppy smuggling, banned live animal exports for fattening and slaughter, and helped to tackle pet abduction and livestock worrying, among other changes.

Commons Leader Penny Mordaunt said last year her colleagues 'should be reassured' that the Government still plans to fulfil its pledges.

Ms Saxby today urged the Government to crack down on puppy, kitten and ferret smuggling by closing loopholes which are exploited by 'unscrupulous' commercial traders.

Opening the second reading debate, Ms Saxby said: 'As a dog owner myself, it is horrific to hear stories of puppies and kittens being smuggled across the border and the poor conditions they have to endure.

'Pets are more than just property they are family, and the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill will ensure that pets are not sold or traded as objects.'

1. **Children’s films such as UP normalise ‘horrific mutilation’ of dog ear cropping, says MP.**

Publication: The Telegraph

By Lauren Shirreff

Link to article: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/03/15/childrens-films-normalise-dog-ear-cropping-tory-mp/#:~:text=Children's%20films%20and%20celebrity%20trends,by%20fellow%20Tory%20Selaine%20Saxby>.

Article: Children’s films and celebrity trends are making people think that it is acceptable to crop their dogs’ ears, an MP has claimed.

Neil Hudson , a Conservative MP, spoke on Friday afternoon in support of a Bill brought by fellow Tory Selaine Saxby.

Ms Saxby’s Animal Welfare Bill has the backing of the Government and proposes that it should be illegal to bring puppies and kittens younger than six months into the country.

It is already illegal in the UK to crop a dog’s ears , but some dog owners send their pets abroad for cropping.

Others buy foreign puppies whose ears have already been cropped.

The procedure has to be carried out on very young dogs and therefore Ms Saxby’s Bill could help to close a loophole in the law.

Mr Hudson told the House that children’s films like Up and DC League of Super-Pets, as well as “popular culture” and “a celebrity culture”, leave people unaware that dogs with cropped ears are “horrifically mutilated”.

The Disney Pixar movie Up features an evil Doberman pinscher with cropped ears as a main antagonist.

Of the film, Mr Hudson said: “If you look really closely at the dogs in that film, many of them are cropped.

“So if people are going to the cinema with their kids, and seeing this on the big screen, that looks normal and that is wrong.”

People therefore “don’t realise that ear cropping is not normal” and so “want to have those dogs”, he continued.

He added that “we need to educate people that these dogs have been horrifically mutilated”.

Ear cropping, along with tail docking, has been illegal in the UK – save for medical reasons – since 2006. Both are referred to as “mutilation” in the Animal Welfare Act.

Yet the practice is on the rise. More than a thousand cases of ear cropping have been reported to the RSPCA since 2020.

The RSPCA recently co-hosted an event at Parliament with Mr Hudson, who is a vet himself and has long campaigned on issues of animal welfare.

He has represented Penrith in Cumbria since 2019 and is the only veterinary surgeon sitting in the House of Commons.

Mr Hudson specialised as a horse vet and owns a black Labrador called Juno.

1. **Puppy and kitten smuggling crackdown moves step closer in commons.**

Publication: BBC

By: Helen Catt, Adam Smith and Chas Geiger

Link to article: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-68563873>

Article: The government will "fully support" new legislation to combat puppy and kitten smuggling, MPs have been told.

A bill banning the import into the UK of puppies, kittens and ferrets under the age of six months has cleared its first Commons hurdle.

Heavily pregnant animals and those with mutilations such as cropped ears or a docked tail would also be covered.

Private members' bills which get government backing stand a greater chance of becoming law.

Despite this, there is no guarantee the bill will become law before a general election, expected later this year.

Ministers first promised to raise the age at which puppies can be imported in 2021, but dropped their legislation in 2023.

Conservative MP Selaine Saxby said her Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill would ensure that pets were not sold or traded as objects.

Opening a Commons debate, the North Devon MP said: "As a dog owner myself, it is horrific to hear stories of puppies and kittens being smuggled across the border, and the poor conditions they have to endure.

MPs attempt to revive animal welfare measures

Rise in puppy smuggling prompts new welfare rules

Covid puppy boom illegal practices persist - vets

"Pets are more than just property, they are family." Her bill would deliver a Tory manifesto commitment by "closing loopholes exploited by unscrupulous commercial trading," she added.

The RSPCA said the measures would stop people "making a quick buck out of the suffering and exploitation of animals", but some organisations which rescue dogs from abroad worry that raising the importation age could put vulnerable puppies at risk.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Therese Coffey gave her backing to the legislation, but urged ministers to roll out its measures swiftly.

She raised concerns that rules limiting the number of pets a person can travel with would not come into force when the bill became law. "I appreciate there might be transition, but at the moment it says six months," she said.

‘'Mutilated’.

The Commons also heard from Conservative Neil Hudson, a vet, that Disney Pixar films such as Up and celebrity culture were normalising ear cropping in dogs.

"If you look really closely at the dogs in that film, many of them are cropped. And so if people are going to the cinema with their kids, and seeing this on the big screen, that looks normal and that is wrong.

"So we need to educate people that these dogs have been horrifically mutilated," he said.

Ms Saxby told MPs that despite not receiving "strong representations" from the ferret-owning community, ferrets were included in the bill because they were in the same category as dogs and cats when it came to the risk of rabies.

Labour MP Samantha Dixon joked that the Commons had not discussed ferrets enough, as opposed to government "reverse ferrets", in the current Parliament as she also spoke in favour of the bill.

During the debate it was revealed that Attorney General Victoria Prentis used to have a pet ferret, called Roulette.

Environment minister Mark Spencer confirmed the government would back the legislation, telling the Commons: "I would like to thank (Ms Saxby) again for taking forward this important bill, and look forward to seeing it progress through the remaining stages in the House and in the other place (House of Lords)."

Labour has indicated it will back the bill, but has accused the Conservatives of having "bottled their manifesto promises".

Major animal welfare charities, such as the Dog's Trust, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, and the RSPCA, have backed the proposals after years of campaigning.

Under the current rules, puppies can be imported from the age of 15 weeks.

Amy Ockelford, from the RSPCA, said raising the age would help prevent puppies being taken away from their mothers too early and being put at risk of disease and behavioural problems.

"It's also making them less marketable to the people who are exploiting their cute puppy charms because they'll be a little bit older by the time they come into the country, a little bit healthier and those welfare issues won't be so significant.

But some dog rescue organisations have expressed concerns. Rachael O'Regan runs a not-for-profit company, The Responsible Dog Rescue, in Southport, which rescues dogs from Romania.

She says the harsh winter weather combined with conditions in public dog shelters and the prevalence of potentially fatal diseases such as parvovirus make young puppies very vulnerable.

"The chances of them contracting an illness and suffering as a result of that, potentially dying, are massively increased. The behaviour issues and being able to correct those and being able to train them becomes more difficult if you are bring them over from six months onwards.

"It's immediately making the job more difficult for the rescuers and for the adopters."

Definitive figures for the number of puppies smuggled into the country do not exist, but, between 2015 and 2023, the Dog's Trust reported that it had rescued more than 3,000 dogs linked to illegal imports.

According to government figures, 116 puppies and kittens were quarantined at the Port of Dover in 2023 for being below the current legally-required minimum age for import.

The new bill would limit - to five by car, or three on foot - the number of cats and dogs people can travel with, to stop traders using the Pet Travel Scheme to smuggle in animals, pretending they are their own pets.

This measure would apply in England, Scotland and Wales.

Painful cosmetic procedures, such as ear-cropping and declawing, are already illegal in the UK.

Ear cropping involves removing all or part of a dog's ear flap, while declawing is partially amputating a cat's toe.

1. **Government backs legislation to tackle illegal pet smuggling.**

Publication: Gov.UK

By: Department for Environment, Food&Rural Affairs and The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP

Link to article: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-backs-legislation-to-tackle-illegal-pet-smuggling>

Article: Government backs legislation to tackle illegal pet smuggling

New measures will close existing loopholes exploited by unscrupulous breeders and traders

Tougher powers to tackle illegal cat and dog smuggling have taken a significant step forward today (15 March) with the announcement of government backing for new legislation.

Delivering on a key manifesto commitment, under the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill a Private Members' Bill sponsored by Selaine Saxby legislation will be introduced to close existing loopholes exploited by immoral breeders and traders to illegally smuggle cats and dogs into the UK.

There are a significant number of pets imported into the UK every year, with 320,000 brought in under the Pet Travel Scheme, and 44,000 as commercial imports last year.

Support for this Bill builds on the Government's efforts to enhance our world-leading standards of animal welfare. The UK was the first country in the world to introduce animal cruelty offences and is the highest ranked G7 nation according to World Animal Protection's Index.

Measures under the Bill will strengthen the Pet Travel Scheme to ensure that no one is able to fraudulently import animals for sale under the guise of being an owner travelling with their own pets. This includes reducing the number of animals that can travel into Great Britain under this scheme from five per person to five per vehicle, or three per foot or air passenger as well as ensuring that pet movements take place within five days of the owner's travel.

The Bill will allow for the introduction of further legislation to raise the minimum age for importing a puppy or a kitten from 15 weeks to six months, allowing them to grow up ahead of being taken on potentially long and stressful journeys which can have a lasting impact on their temperament and behaviour.

Secondary legislation under the Bill also allows for the ban on imports of heavily pregnant dogs and cats or animals with cropped ears, docked tails or that have been declawed.

Ear cropping is a painful process where a dog's outer ears are surgically altered or removed to make them look more aggressive. This inhumane surgical procedure, which has been illegal in this country since 2006, can hinder their ability to communicate with other dogs and their owners. The majority of these dogs are suspected to have undergone the procedure overseas and under the proposed secondary legislation would be banned from entering the country.

Environment Secretary Steve Barclay said:

"Pet smuggling is an abhorrent trade which causes great suffering to animals.

"As a nation of animal lovers, and a dog lover myself, we will not accept this, which is why we are determined fulfil our manifesto commitment and bring it to an end.

"This Bill will help protect the health and welfare of thousands of animals that are brought into the country each year and stop criminals looking to profit from the rise in demand for pets. We will do all we can to support its swift passage through Parliament."

Selaine Saxby MP said:

"I am glad that the Government is supporting this vital Bill and is committed to its swift passage to safeguard the welfare of thousands of dogs, cats and ferrets that come into Great Britain from overseas each year.

"I would like to thank the tireless campaigning from the pet charities who have shared their views about this Bill. I hope they are reassured by the measures outlined in the Bill, which will stop this cruel puppy and kitten smuggling trade by closing loopholes exploited by unscrupulous commercial traders.

"We really are a nation of pet lovers, and this legislation will ensure that the UK is a world leader in animal welfare."

Harriet Main, Public Affairs Manager at the RSPCA, said:

"We know many animal lovers share our concern at the numbers of mutilated dogs and cats; and young and pregnant pets being imported into the country.

"So we're delighted that the Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Bill has passed through the Second Reading stage and that we're one step closer to living in a country with better protection for our animals.

"This law will take steps towards protecting animals from the suffering they endure as part of this trade, which increasingly involves gangs who are associated with serious organised crime.

"It will also protect cats and dogs from painful procedures such as declawing and ear cropping, and will place restrictions on the ages that cats, dogs and ferrets can be brought into the country from overseas, clamping down on the lucrative trade in puppies and kittens which often seriously compromises their welfare and wellbeing. As we strive for a better world for animals, we are delighted that this Bill is progressing."

Paula Boyden, Veterinary Director at Dogs Trust, says:

"Dogs Trust has been campaigning for tougher laws around the illegal importation of dogs for over 10 years, during which time we have cared for more than 3,000 puppies caught up in this abhorrent trade.

"This Bill will offer protection to countless dogs and puppies to prevent them suffering at the hands of smugglers. We are delighted that, once passed, it will be illegal to import dogs with brutal mutilations, prevent heavily pregnant dogs from being smuggled in cramped and squalid conditions, and make sure puppies are not exploited by raising the age at which they can be imported to six months.

"We are grateful to Selaine Saxby MP for taking forward her Private Members Bill and are hopeful with Government backing the bill will be passed into law quickly"

Illegal pet smuggling is often associated with serious welfare issues, and pets found to be illegally smuggled face a significantly higher risk of developing illnesses or even death. This Bill allows the government to bring forward a ban or restrictions on low welfare imports of dogs, cats and ferrets into the UK.

By supporting the Bill, the Government is delivering pledges made in its Action Plan for Animal Welfare to clamp down on puppy smuggling.

We have also now achieved our commitment to deliver the Kept Animals Bills measures individually, with all of the measures that needed legislation back before Parliament.

Since publishing the Action Plan for Animal Welfare in 2021, we have also brought in new laws to recognise animal sentience, introduced tougher penalties for animal cruelty offences; announced an extension of the ivory ban to cover other ivory bearing species; supported legislation to ban glue traps, the import of detached shark fins and measures to ban the advertising and offering for sale of low welfare activities abroad.

Further information:

Kept Animals Bills measures are:

The Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Bill which is only possible now we have left the European Union will put an end to the export of live animals for slaughter and fattening from Great Britain, stopping animals enduring unnecessary stress, exhaustion and injury on long journeys.

The Pet Abduction Bill which has government support - will create a new specific offence to tackle dog and cat abduction.

The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) (Amendment) Bill also supported by government - will introduce tougher powers to tackle livestock worrying incidents.

We have delivered new legislation protecting primates, which will bring in a strict licensing scheme to ensure that only private keepers who meet new welfare and licensing standards will be able to keep primates.

1. **New laws for puppy and kitten owners in crackdown on ‘immoral’ trend.**

Publication: Birmingham Live

By James Rodger

Link to article: <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/new-laws-puppy-kitten-owners-28829451>

Article: A huge change for cat and dog owners has been announced as owners face new pet rules in a crackdown on "illegal and immoral" breeders. The import ban will also apply to heavily pregnant dogs and cats or those with mutilations like cropped ears.

Puppies and kittens less than six months old will be barred from coming to Britain under a pet smuggling crackdown. Environment Secretary Steve Barclay said: "Pet smuggling is an abhorrent trade which causes great suffering to animals."

There are a significant number of pets imported into the UK every year, with 320,000 brought in under the Pet Travel Scheme, and 44,000 as commercial imports last year. Mr Barclay went on: "As a nation of animal lovers, and a dog lover myself, we will not accept this, which is why we are determined to fulfil our manifesto commitment and bring it to an end."

Harriet Main, Public Affairs Manager at the RSPCA, said: "We know many animal lovers share our concern at the numbers of mutilated dogs and cats; and young and pregnant pets being imported into the country. So we're delighted that the Animal Welfare Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets Bill has passed through the Second Reading stage and that we're one step closer to living in a country with better protection for our animals.

"This law will take steps towards protecting animals from the suffering they endure as part of this trade, which increasingly involves gangs who are associated with serious organised crime. It will also protect cats and dogs from painful procedures such as declawing and ear cropping, and will place restrictions on the ages that cats, dogs and ferrets can be brought into the country from overseas, clamping down on the lucrative trade in puppies and kittens which often seriously compromises their welfare and wellbeing. As we strive for a better world for animals, we are delighted that this Bill is progressing."

Paula Boyden, Veterinary Director at Dogs Trust, says: "Dogs Trust has been campaigning for tougher laws around the illegal importation of dogs for over 10 years, during which time we have cared for more than 3,000 puppies caught up in this abhorrent trade. This Bill will offer protection to countless dogs and puppies to prevent them suffering at the hands of smugglers. We are delighted that, once passed, it will be illegal to import dogs with brutal mutilations, prevent heavily pregnant dogs from being smuggled in cramped and squalid conditions, and make sure puppies are not exploited by raising the age at which they can be imported to six months.

"We are grateful to Selaine Saxby MP for taking forward her Private Members Bill and are hopeful with Government backing the bill will be passed into law quickly".

1. **Major change to pet rules in crackdown on ‘illegal and immoral’ breeders.**

Publication: The Sun

By Jack Elsom

Link to article: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/politics/26722213/major-change-to-pet-rules-crackdown/>

Article: PUPPIES and kittens less than six months old will be barred from coming to Britain under a pet smuggling crackdown.

The import ban will also apply to heavily pregnant dogs and cats or those with cruel mutilations like cropped ears.

Ministers announced the measures to flush out animals being sneaked illegally into the UK by immoral breeders.

More than 320,000 pets were brought into the country last year with many suspected of being unlawfully smuggled.

New legislation seeks to close loopholes from smugglers claiming they are their pets by reducing the person-animal ratio to five per vehicle or three per foot passenger.

The minimum age of imported animals is also being raised from 15 weeks to six months to stop “long and stressful journeys” that can impact them for life.

Environment Secretary Steve Barclay said: “Pet smuggling is an abhorrent trade which causes great suffering to animals.

“As a nation of animal lovers, and a dog lover myself, we will not accept this, which is why we are determined to fulfil our manifesto commitment and bring it to an end.”

Fellow Tory MP De Neil Hudson said Disney Pixar films such as Up and celebrity culture are normalising ear cropping in dogs.

Under the crackdown any mutilations will make animals ineligible for entry because they are associated with smuggling.

1. **Next stage for MP’s Puppy and Kitten Smuggling Bill**

Publication: North Devon Gazette

By North Devon Today

Link to article: <https://www.northdevongazette.co.uk/news/local-news/1451907/next-stage-for-mps-puppy-and-kitten-smuggling-bill.html>

Article: On Friday, March 15, Selaine Saxby MP spoke in the Second Reading of her Animal Welfare (Importation for Dogs, Cats and Ferrets. The Government announced its backing for the new legislation which will close existing loopholes exploited by unscrupulous breeders and traders to illegally smuggle cats and dogs into the UK.

Since 2012, the Pet Travel Scheme, created to make it easy for owners to take their family pets on holiday with them, has been abused by unscrupulous traders.

The Bill will strengthen the Pet Travel Scheme to ensure that no one is able to fraudulently import animals for sale under the guise of being an owner travelling with their own pets) Bill in the House of Commons.

Measures in the Bill, which will be enacted through primary legislation, include reducing the number of animals that can travel under the non commercial rules from five per person to five per vehicle or three per foot or air passenger.

The Bill also ensures that when an authorised person carries out a non commercial movement of a dog, cat, or ferret, it may only take place within five days of the owner’s movement.

Measures in the Bill, which will be enacted through secondary legislation, include introducing prohibitions that restrict the commercial and non commercial movement into Great Britain of puppies and kittens under six months, dogs and cats with non exempted mutilations, for example, dogs with cropped ears or docked tails, declawed cats, and heavily pregnant dogs and cats who are more than 42 days pregnant.

Bruce, a French Bulldog from the Dogs Trust and Blu, a Cavachon Puppy from Battersea Dogs and Cats Home were in Westminster to take photos after Selaine’s successful Second Reading on Friday 15th March.

Selaine Saxby, MP for North Devon and Bill Sponsor said: “I am glad that the Government is supporting this vital Bill and committed to its swift passage to ensure safeguard the welfare of thousands of puppies, dogs, cats and ferrets that come into Great Britain from overseas each year.

“I would like to thank the tireless campaigning from the pet charities who have shared their views about this Bill. I hope that they are reassured by the measures outlined in the Bill which will stop this cruel trade by closing loopholes exploited by unscrupulous commercial traders.

“We really are a nation of pet lovers, and this legislation will ensure that the UK is leading the world when it comes to animal welfare.”

Owen Sharp, Chief Executive, Dogs Trust said: “For more than ten years, Dogs Trust has been working to tackle the horrific puppy smuggling trade. We hope that Selaine’s Bill marks an important step towards tackling these issues, so that no more dogs like Bruce have to suffer at the hands of unscrupulous breeders and sellers.

“We’d like to thank Selaine for bringing forward this Bill offering protection to countless dogs caught up in this cruel trade, who have suffered so terribly at the hands of smugglers. Once the bill is passed, it will no longer be legal to import dogs with brutal mutilations, prevent heavily pregnant dogs who have been smuggled in cramped and squalid conditions, and make sure puppies are not exploited by raising the age at which they can be imported to 6 months.”

Harriet Main, Public Affairs Manager, RSPCA said: “We’re delighted that this Bill is progressing - it is huge news for animal welfare. A change in law is urgently needed to protect animals and close legal loopholes that have been abused for many years by people making quick cash from the exploitation of animals.

“As we strive to create a better world for every animal in our 200th year, the RSPCA is urging MPs to support this Bill to ensure it passes through Parliament quickly.”