**[NAME]**

**[ADDRESS LINE 1]**

**[POSTCODE]**

**[EMAIL ADDRESS]**

**[PHONE NUMBER]**

Dear **[NAME OF POLITICIAN]**,

 I am writing to raise my concerns about the devastating issue of dog theft, which is an appalling act with alarming consequences for both the pets stolen and the families and individuals victim to this crime, across the country.

Supported by its vast expertise and experience on dog-related matters, The Kennel Club has launched its ‘Paw and Order: Dog Theft Reform’ campaign to urge the UK Government and devolved administrations to ensure that sentences which are more reflective of the horrific nature of this crime are available for those found guilty of pet theft. There is currently little evidence of the maximum sentence provisions being used and, unfortunately, a staggering 98% of dog theft criminals are never charged.

Current sentencing provisions place undue weighting on a stolen pet’s monetary value, rather than their emotional worth. As such, I join The Kennel Club in calling for these provisions to be revised in order to take into account a dog’s sentience, their role within their family, and the emotional harm inflicted on dog owners when they lose their pet. It is essential that the true, devastating impact of a beloved dog’s loss is fully considered and properly reflected when sentencing those guilty of this crime.

With unprecedented levels of demand for puppies during the Covid-19 pandemic, accompanied by an eye-watering increase in prices, it is more important than ever that dog theft criminals know they will face the full weight of the law. According to data collected from police forces around the country, The Kennel Club estimates that 2,355 dogs were stolen last year across the United Kingdom, a 7% increase compared to 2019. Despite these tragically high figures, the police were unable to identify a suspect in nearly 60% of the dog theft cases reported between 2015 and 2020.

The Kennel Club believes that allocating more resources to this crime, creating a central database with a standardised reporting method, and making more data readily available regarding the number of crimes, arrests and convictions are all fundamental steps towards understanding the extent of and tackling the problem.

Whilst I welcome the establishment of the Government’s Pet Theft Taskforce, I believe that further action must be taken to allay the fears of dog owners across the country. It is my hope that you will take my concerns, and those of many others, forward and continue to press the Government to take swift action on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

**[NAME]**

**[POSTCODE]**