

# New England State Issues

## February 2021

News from the New England State Capitols – links to the bill text are highlighted

**Connecticut** – Several bills impacting dog owners have been pre-filed for this year and AKC GR is meeting virtually with the Connecticut Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners to discuss them. For example, [SB 458](#) a companion animal breeders license has been proposed and AKC GR held a virtual meeting with the Senate sponsor and President of the Connecticut Federation to discuss it.

**Connecticut** – On February 11, 2021, [SB 123](#) increasing the penalties for injuring or killing a police K-9 or volunteer search and rescue K-9 has a public hearing scheduled. AKC GR supports the bill.

**Maine** – The Maine Department of Agriculture has filed an omnibus bill, [LD 103](#), that would allow it to employ any person considered necessary to assist in any response to a natural or man-made disaster affecting animals; appoint to the Animal Welfare Advisory Council a person who is a pet food supplier and an attorney with experience in the state court system; and change the rabies vaccination requirement for a dog over 3 months of age instead of 6 months. Last, the bill provides for the revocation of animal control officer certification if the officer refuses or intentionally fails to perform the officer's statutory duties. AKC GR is reviewing the bill with leadership from the Maine Federation of Dog Clubs.

**Massachusetts** – The bill filing deadline for the 2021-2022 legislative session is February 19, 2021.

**Massachusetts** – Representative Xiarhos has reached out to AKC GR to ask for assistance securing co-sponsors for Nero's bill, [HD 326](#). It would authorize the emergency transport and treatment of police K-9s injured in the line of duty. AKC GR issued an alert asking Massachusetts residents to contact their lawmakers before the February 26, 2021 deadline.

**New Hampshire** – On January 27, 2021 the House Environment and Agriculture Committee heard concerns from AKC GR and NH DOGS

regarding [HB 532](#), establishing an animal records database and has been drafting changes to the bill to address those concerns. [Read more](#). The Senate Finance Committee is hosting a hearing on the Senate version of the original bill, SB 127, on February 9, 2021. AKC GR will testify to request that they adopt the changes now being made by the House committee.

**New Hampshire – [SB 122](#)** would increase the penalties for a person to injure or kill; or allow their animal to injure or kill a working service dog. AKC GR has written testimony in support for the February 9, 2021 hearing.

**New Hampshire –** To deter dog theft and tampering with tracking dog collars, [HB 338](#) would increase the penalty from a misdemeanor offense to a class B felony. AKC GR supports this bill and is testifying February 10, 2021.

**New Hampshire –** AKC GR worked closely with NH beagle clubs to express concerns about [HB 118](#), which would change the qualifications for commissioners appointed to the NH Fish and Game Commission. Instead of sporting clubs providing nominees for appointment, the bill would authorize “participating organizations” to nominate individuals and defined them as organizations with wildlife or conservation experience. The House Fish and Game Committee decided at public hearing on February 1, 2021 that the bill was not ready and has retained it. No further action on [HB 118](#) will take place this year.

**Rhode Island –** Re-filed from 2019, [HB 5040](#) would establish an animal cruelty registry prohibiting offenders from owning animals in the future by requiring pet sellers and shelters to review the registry before transferring an animal. Violations would result in significant fines. AKC GR will join the Rhode Island American Civil Liberties Union in testifying at the February 9, 2021 hearing to express concerns that registries have not been found to be effective at preventing animal cruelty and to encourage the committee to consider using more effective proven tools.

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