

New England State Capitol Issues September 2021

By [AKC Government Relations](#)

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Connecticut – Deputy Speaker Mushinsky has met with two state agencies regarding legislation for therapy dog recognition. A bill is expected to be re-drafted and re-filed for next year.

Massachusetts – [HB 2547](#) would authorize the emergency transport and treatment of police K-9s injured in the line of duty. AKC GR urged Massachusetts residents to contact their lawmakers in support and request that they co-sponsor the bill. As a result, a significant number of new legislators signed on as co-sponsors. A companion bill, [SB 1606](#), was refiled in the Senate. AKC GR issued an [alert](#) and testified in support before the Joint Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee on July 14, 2021.

Massachusetts – [SB 230](#) and [HB 384](#) seek to ban the retail sale of cats and dogs in pet shops unless they are sourced from animal shelters or rescue organizations. Similar to past versions, the proposed animal shelter and rescue definitions are problematic because they exclude rescue activities by breeders. The bills initially were assigned to the Joint Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee for review, which last session redrafted them to create consumer protections irrespective of the source of the pet. The bills have been reassigned to the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. AKC GR anticipates public hearings this fall.

Massachusetts – [HB 305](#) would establish state licensure for commercial boarding and training kennels and provide numerous regulations regarding care, group sizes, and housing, just to name a few. In addition, the state would approve required training programs regarding animal behavior, dog body language, and other subjects. Injuries to dogs or people would be reported to the state. Other types of kennels (including personal kennels) could be required in the future to obtain state licensure in addition to a municipal kennel license. AKC GR issued [an alert](#) and testified at the public hearing in July. Following the hearing, AKC GR had the opportunity to submit recommended changes for the bill.

Massachusetts – [HB 378](#) would require anyone who grooms a pet for money to pass approved testing standards and obtain a state grooming license. Grooming facilities would also undergo periodic inspections to ensure compliance with rules and regulations issued. Use of a cage or box dryer would be prohibited. Violations would result in penalties ranging from \$100 to \$1,000 per offense. AKC GR testified at the public hearing on July 12, 2021, regarding concerns detailed in AKC GR's [alert](#). Following the hearing, AKC GR met virtually with the bill sponsor's office and outlined suggested amendments to the legislation.

New Hampshire – [HB 92](#) would establish a committee to study best practices for companion animal groomers. The House Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee held a work session on September 7, 2021.

New Hampshire – [HB 366](#) would authorize a court to order psychological evaluation and treatment for animal cruelty caused by animal hoarding disorder. The House Environment and Agriculture Committee held a work session on September 14, where AKC GR reviewed recommended changes to the draft. The committee voted to next secure review and input from the Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, who is a retired judge.

New Hampshire – [HB 367](#) would enact certain requirements for a dog, cat, or ferret imported into the state for transfer of ownership. Requirements include receiving a health certificate from a licensed veterinarian and being held for a 7-day quarantine period. A work session scheduled for September 14, 2021, by the House Environment and Agriculture Committee did not take up the measure.

New Hampshire – [HB 585](#) would allow the prepayment of dog licensing fees for the duration of a rabies vaccination. The House Environment and Agriculture Committee noted concerns expressed by municipal clerks and the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture during

their September 14, work session. The recommendation was to vote the bill as inexpedient to legislate.

New Hampshire – [SB 17](#), among other provisions, would permit brew pubs to allow customers to bring dogs onto outdoor areas. The Senate Commerce Committee held a work session on the bill for September 8, 2021.