

# New England State Capitol Issues November 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.

**Connecticut** – In an [October 28 Connecticut Post opinion](#), CT Votes for Animals urged action to address animal fighting in the state by calling upon the General Assembly to pass legislation on animal fighting paraphernalia as proposed by the Humane Society of the United States and supported by their organization in 2019 and 2021. AKC GR will closely monitor any bill text in this regard.

**Connecticut** – After attending the National Council of Insurance Lawmakers summer meeting in Boston and [speaking with AKC GR](#), Representative Tammy Nuccio is contemplating filing legislation to ban homeowner and renter insurers from discriminating against owners of dogs based upon their breed, size or appearance.

**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. On November 9, 2021, the Senate Ways and Means Committee responded positively by making a few changes to the text and releasing it favorably as [SB 2573](#). New text in the bill provides flexibility when utilizing the provision if ambulances are in limited supply or an emergency veterinary clinic is not nearby. SB 2573 passed the Senate on a unanimous vote taken November 10.

**Massachusetts** – More than 1,100 amendments were filed to by members of the House for an October 28 debate on how to best

appropriate COVID recovery funds of more than \$3 billion from the federal American Rescue Plan Act. Two adopted amendments of interest in the final bill sent to the Senate as [HB 4234](#), would authorize the University of Massachusetts to establish a low-income veterinary clinic in Newton and another provides funding to the Raynham animal control facility. AKC GR will monitor the bill's progress.

**Massachusetts** – Multiple re-filed bills with problematic provisions for dog owners were considered by the Joint Municipalities and Regional Government Committee on September 28, 2021. AKC GR issued [an alert](#) summarizing the bills and strongly encouraging residents to email the committee in addition to AKC's written testimony. AKC GR provided support for just one bill on the agenda, [HB 2146](#), because it would create the same consumer protections irrespective of where a pet was acquired.

**Massachusetts** – On October 12, 2021 AKC GR testified in support of [SB 885](#) and [HB 1437](#) which would prevent housing and insurance entities from discriminating against owners of dogs based upon breed, size or appearance. An [alert](#) was issued encouraging Massachusetts dog owners to express support.

**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 soon.

**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, which are being considered.

**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, and October 13, 2021. The committee voted the bill inexpedient to legislate at their executive session held on October 26.

**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. AKC GR participated in that review process and the Chairs are now working on amendments. The bill has been referred to an interim study.

**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 September 8, and October 13, 2021. At the executive session held October 26, the committee [amended and narrowed the text](#) to allowing dogs on restaurant patios under specific conditions and voted that the bill ought to pass.

**New Hampshire** – House lawmakers have completed the filing of bills for consideration in 2022. Although text is not yet available, two are of immediate concern to AKC GR. LSR 2022-2690 would prohibit the use of canine units in law enforcement and LSR 2022-2617 would prohibit the capture, possession, and propagation of hares and rabbits for

hunting, training and field trials. AKC GR reached out to the bill sponsor of the ban on police K-9s and after sharing educational materials, she withdrew the bill request. AKC GR has notified impacted dog owners of the bill negatively impacting dog hunting, training and field trials of the second proposal.

**ME, Yarmouth** – AKC GR posted [an alert](#) regarding proposed changes to the town of Yarmouth’s dog ordinances. A letter with recommendations was submitted to the town council by AKC GR. One issue identified is an original draft only required an officer to make a reasonable effort, “if possible” to notify the owner of an impounded dog. AKC GR has requested striking the phrase “if possible” and adding the following, “Where an owner is not known, all animal shelter facilities shall inspect for tattoos, ear tags, or other permanent forms of positive identification and shall scan for a microchip upon admission and prior to transferring ownership of an unclaimed or abandoned animal.” The [draft proposal](#) inserted AKC GR’s recommendations and public hearings to review and vote upon the draft took place at the council’s October 7, and 21, meetings where most AKC recommendations were adopted. Details are [here](#).