

New England State Capitol Issues December 2021

By [AKC Government Relations](#)

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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 – 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 – [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.

Maine – Although bill text is not yet available, two measures of pending interest to AKC in late 2021/early 2022 include LR 2247, "An Act to Improve the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Low-cost Spaying and Neutering Program" and LR 2453, "An Act to Increase Maine's Veterinary Workforce".

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 in 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 – House lawmakers have completed the filing of bills for consideration in 2022. LSR 2022-2690 would have prohibited the use of canine units in law

enforcement but, after speaking with AKC GR about the value, care and conditions of these working dogs, the sponsor withdrew the proposal.

New Hampshire – [HB 1308](#) would prohibit the capture, possession, and propagation of hares and rabbits for hunting, training and field trials. AKC GR has reached out to the bill sponsor and sent a letter opposing the bill to the New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission, which met on December 14, 2021 and voted to publicly oppose the bill also. AKC GR is working with the New Hampshire beagle clubs and other stakeholders to develop a fact sheet dispelling the myths being promoted by bill supporters. A public hearing could be scheduled as early as January.

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