

New England State Capitol Issues February 2022

By [AKC Government Relations](#)

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Connecticut –The Connecticut animal advocates caucus has introduced [HB 5170](#). This bill would establish requirements for the adequate sheltering of dogs and add additional requirements concerning the tethering of dogs and it is scheduled for a public hearing by the Joint Planning and Development Committee on Friday, February 25, 2022. AKC GR and the Connecticut Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners are reviewing the text. [Read more.](#)

Connecticut – [SB 141](#) would increase the penalty for intentionally injuring a police K9 or volunteer search and rescue dog. AKC GR supports the bill in recognition of the value of these working dogs.

Massachusetts –[SB 581](#) would inappropriately remove the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources' authority to regulate privately-operated animal shelters and rescue organizations. In 2020, the agency adopted [13 pages of regulation](#) to address sick, diseased and behaviorally challenged animals being re-homed by these organizations. AKC GR submitted written testimony to the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture on November 17, 2021 against the bill and it was sent to study order on February 3, 2022.

Massachusetts – Despite AKC GR testimony in opposition to [SB 1322](#), the bill has been released favorably again this session from the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government and sent to the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Among other restrictions, the bill would allow an animal control officer employed by a city or town to tell residents how many dogs or cats they can own after an inspection of their premises upon kennel license application. AKC GR submitted a detailed letter to this committee outlining concerns with the text on December 21, 2021. This legislation has been re-filed multiple sessions in a row following the same path of “no further action”. AKC GR will continue to monitor.

Massachusetts – [SB 2397](#) would prohibit the misrepresentation of a service animal. AKC GR submitted testimony in support to the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs for the public hearing that was held on January 7, 2022. On February 14, the bill was reported favorably by committee and referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means.

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 amendments provide flexibility when utilizing the provision if ambulances are in limited supply or an emergency veterinary clinic is not nearby. The Governor signed it as Chapter 23 of the Acts of 2022, on February 18, 2022. It becomes effective in 90 days.

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. The deadline to advance HB 2146 has expired. [SB 1341](#) would have established non-economic damages for injury to a pet. AKC opposed the bill and the committee sent it to a study order on January 31, 2022. [HB 2130](#) ("Relative to Puppy Mills") would require commercial breeder kennels, which are licensed by their municipality, to also obtain an annual municipal "breeders" license upon evaluation. [HB 2209](#) would require the assessment of a dangerous dog with recommendations for training. The committee has extended its deadline to act on HB 2130 and HB 2209 until March 16, 2022.

Massachusetts – [HB 384](#) and its companion bill, [SB 230](#) would ban the retail sale of cats and dogs in pet shops unless sourced from animal shelters or rescues. AKC GR testified at the November 17, 2021 public hearing highlighting the elimination of consumer protections in these proposals and requesting the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture vote "No". On February 3, 2022 the committee sent the bills to study order and they will not advance.

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 were being considered. The deadline to advance the bill has expired.

Massachusetts – [HB 917](#) would undercut current regulations that require imported animals to be quarantined in an isolation room at a facility, instead of allowing the animal to be kept with a foster family. AKC GR expressed concerns in written testimony that this may reduce compliance and increase the risk of communicable disease spread. The Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture on sent the bill to study order on February 3, 2022.

Massachusetts –The Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture heard testimony on three bills to protect research animals, allowing adoption after health examination upon retiring from research activities. AKC GR supported [HB 901](#) and [HB 966](#) at the November 17, 2021 hearing and the committee advanced the bill favorably on February 3, 2022. HB 901 is on the House calendar for consideration.

Massachusetts – [SB 885](#) and [HB 1437](#) would protect Massachusetts dog owners from housing and insurance breed discrimination by preventing public housing and homeowner associations from discriminating against residents based on the breed, size or weight of dog owned; and by prohibiting insurance companies doing business in the commonwealth from denying, cancelling, refusing to renew, or inflating homeowners or renters insurance premiums, based upon breed of dog owned. Despite AKC GR’s testimony in support at the October 12, 2021, Joint Housing Committee hearing, these bills have been sent to study order and will not advance this session.

Massachusetts –[SB 551](#) would create an advisory board, with a shelter and rescue coordinator serving as chair, to oversee various functions of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. AKC GR expressed concerns to the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture at the November 17, 2021 public hearing, noting that a formal advisory board with permanent members chaired by a shelter and rescue coordinator is not necessary for the state agency to function effectively. The bill advanced favorably from committee on February 3, 2022.

Massachusetts –[SB 585](#) would unreasonably expand the definition of “kennel” to a place where one or more dogs are bred on a residential property and require inspection, fees, and licensure. AKC GR submitted written testimony opposing the bill at the November 17, 2021 public hearing because it would contradict an ordinary person’s understanding that a kennel is a pack or collection of dogs on a single premise regulated by state law and municipal ordinances in Massachusetts. The Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture on sent the bill to study order on February 3, 2022.

Massachusetts – [HB 305](#), referred to as “Ollie’s Law, 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 expressing concerns with the bill at the public hearing in July. AKC GR also submitted recommended changes. The committee has decided it will not advance the bill this session.

Massachusetts – [SB 2672](#) was released favorably on February 10, 2022, by the Joint Judiciary Committee as a re-write of nine bills. AKC GR issued [an alert](#) summarizing before testifying at the May 19, 2021, public hearing. The bill would insert domestic animals and livestock into the civil fine structure for lack of adequate shelter or sanitation for dogs. Civil fines collected would be forwarded to the Homeless Fund that provides money for ACO training and the state spay/neuter program. It also provides the court with great latitude in deciding how long the offender will be prohibited from owning animals, including exceptions if an offender can prove they are capable of caring for animals or have sought required counseling. AKC GR is monitoring this bill.

Maine – Two measures of interest to AKC in 2022 include [LD 1828](#), “An Act to Improve the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry’s Low-cost Spaying and Neutering Program” which would require the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to contract for the administration of the Companion Animal Sterilization Fund, and [LD 1744](#), to increase funding for the Animal Welfare Fund by increasing certain animal feed fees. Both bills were scheduled for public hearing on January 20, 2022 and AKC GR will monitor their movement.

Maine – [LD 1885](#), “An Act to Increase Maine’s Veterinary Workforce” would create a program similar to the Doctors for Maine’s Future Scholarship Program in order to increase the veterinary workforce in the state. AKC GR and the Maine Federation of Dog Clubs support this initiative. A public hearing by the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business was held on February 3, 2022 and two subsequent work sessions to work out details on the bill have taken place.

Maine – AKC GR is pleased to note that Senator Marianne Moore has again filed a Resolution, [SP 669](#), identifying May 1, 2022 as Purebred Dog Day.

Maine – [LD 482](#) would adopt a model act for the regulation of pet insurance. It is a concept bill that will be considered at 10am on February 24, 2022 by the Joint Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.

New Hampshire – [SB 368](#) has been filed at the request of the Commissioner for the Department of Agriculture and Markets to address challenges enforcing the licensed pet vendor requirements. The bill would provide authority to seize animals maintained by a pet vendor and housed in the licensed portion of a premise, if, within 30 days of license revocation, the animals have not been transferred to another person. AKC GR and NH DOGS are seriously concerned about the text and raised constitutional issues among other problems at the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources public hearing held on January 11, 2022.

New Hampshire – The House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee heard testimony on [HB 1004](#) on January 28, 2022. This bill would make failure to provide your contact information after a dog injures another person a misdemeanor crime. AKC GR submitted testimony outlining concerns that although this bill is intended to promote responsible dog ownership, as filed, the text is vague and inconsistent with current state law. First, HB 1004 does not define the term “injury” leaving the requirement to provide your contact information open to subjective interpretation. Second, it would charge a dog owner with a misdemeanor for failure to provide their contact information to someone injured by their dog even when trespassing on their property.

New Hampshire – Representative Read has filed [HB 1107](#) to establish a committee that would study whether legislation should be proposed to prohibit discrimination or to add protection for pet owners and pets under property leasing and landlord-tenant laws. AKC GR submitted testimony in support of the measure for the January 12, 2022 public hearing. The committee reported the bill “Inexpedient to Legislate” on February 10, 2022.

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 – [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 is working with impacted dog owners to oppose the bill. Members of multiple hunting organizations are also opposed and will join AKC GR, NH DOGS and New Hampshire beagle clubs testifying in opposition at the public hearing scheduled for January 14, 2022 before the House Fish and Game and Marine Resources Committee. The committee voted 18 to 1 that the bill was “Inexpedient to Legislate” on January 25, indicating strong support for hunting dogs.

New Hampshire – Representative Gallagher reached out to AKC GR for assistance with his bill, [HB 1186](#). It would mandate that shelters allow individuals to bring their companion animals with them when ordered to evacuate due to a declared emergency. After discussion with the Disaster Animal Response Team manager, AKC GR learned that although four emergency trailers across the state can be deployed, there are significant gaps in the emergency response plan. AKC GR testified in support of the bill’s intent on January 25, and is working with the committee on appropriate amendments to the bill.

New Hampshire – [HB 1310](#) would ban the discharge of a firearm in the direction of a building, livestock, or pets that are within eyesight. On January 26, AKC GR testified before the House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee noting the bill’s intent in ensuring responsible use of firearms, but the likely chilling effect on the use of companion dogs while hunting. The Sportsmen’s Alliance and New Hampshire’s Fish and Game Commission also testified in opposition. The committee voted the bill “Inexpedient to Legislate” and it will not advance.

New Hampshire – [HB 1433](#) has been introduced as a “housekeeping” bill that would strike sections of law imposing fines for the purposeful poisoning of a dog and inserting text in the animal cruelty statute making the negligent poisoning of animals a misdemeanor and purposeful poisoning a felony crime; with an exception for poisoning rats and vermin. AKC GR submitted testimony for the January 28 hearing noting concerns that these changes would remove from the current statute the element of intent and impose criminal liability for incidents of accidental animal poisoning. A pet may gain access to a potentially harmful or fatal substance and many toxins are common items in your home and yard. The House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee is reviewing testimony received.

New Hampshire – [HB 1327](#) would include diabetes in the conditions listed for eligibility for a service animal. On February 16, 2022, it was voted “ought to pass” by the House Committee on Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs. AKC GR supports HB 1327.

New Hampshire – [SB 17](#), which authorizes dogs in outdoor dining areas under certain conditions was held over from 2021 and recently sent to Governor Sununu’s desk. He signed it into law on February 26, 2022.

Rhode Island – [SB 2227](#) has been re-filed by the Senate Minority Leader for consideration. This bill would authorize the court to appoint a student attorney or pro bono attorney in any civil or criminal case to represent an animal in the interests of justice. AKC GR and the Rhode Island ACLU will again testify in opposition to this bill as it would change the property legal status of animals and provide non-human legal rights instead.

Rhode Island – [HB 6624](#) would establish an animal abuser registry that requires pet sellers to check the registry prior to transfer and face penalties for transferring an animal to a convicted abuser on the registry. This bill is a re-filed measure that AKC GR has previously expressed concerns with and did again via telephone to the House Judiciary Committee on January 25, 2022. It has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [HB 7021](#) would authorize the emergency treatment and transport of a police K9 injured in the line of duty. AKC GR supports this bill. It is scheduled for a public hearing on February 3, 2022 before the House Health and Human Services Committee.

Rhode Island – [H. 7088](#) would amend the district courts’ domestic violence protections to include pets in protection orders. We applaud this effort, particularly given the complex dilemma involving pets and domestic violence situations. However, AKC GR is concerned about the use of the word “custody” in [H. 7088](#) and recommended on January 25, that the House Judiciary Committee reserve this legal term for children only.

Rhode Island – [H. 7087](#) would create a court procedure for pets in divorce and separation proceedings based on the best interests of the animal. Long-standing legal traditions in the United States provide that pets are considered the legal property of their owners, under which their care and treatment is ensured. Last session, AKC GR worked with the bill sponsor to amend the predecessor bill by replacing “custody” with “possession or ownership”. AKC GR testified in support of H. 7087 on January 25, via telephone to the House Judiciary Committee.

Rhode Island – [HB 7360](#) would amend the definition of “domestic violence” to include (v) Coercive control of another, which is a pattern of behavior that in purpose or effect

unreasonably interferes with a person's free will and personal liberty; including committing or threatening to commit cruelty to animals that intimidates another. AKC GR submitted testimony in support of HB 7360 at the House Judiciary hearing on February 16, 2022. The sponsor has since withdrawn the bill to work on it further.

Rhode Island – [HB 7305](#) would add the general agent of the Rhode Island society for the prevention of cruelty to animals and any special agents appointed by the society while enforcing any of the laws of this state in relation to cruelty of animals to the definition of peace officers. This is to clarify the role of these agents and AKC GR will monitor the bill.

Rhode Island – [HB 7572](#) is a re-filed bill that would prohibit a person convicted of killing an animal or of unnecessary cruelty to animals amounting to torture from owning or exercising control of an animal for life. Violators would be subject to a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1000) for each violation.

Rhode Island – [HB 7573](#) would create a legal process by which formerly cohabitating parties could seek from the district court a determination as to ownership of any pet. Because it would change the legal status of animals as property, AKC GR opposes HB 7573.

Vermont – [HB 504](#) would mandate the drafting of a report on which entities have what responsibilities for animal issues in the state and outline the consolidation of responsibilities under one entity that would provide uniform standards. The Animal Cruelty Investigation Advisory Board submitted a report to the legislature last year and plans to work with this legislation to advance recommendations in their report. AKC GR and the Vermont Federation of Dog Clubs plan to be involved.

Vermont – [SB 155](#) would reorganize public safety services within the Executive Branch and create the Agency of Public Safety to oversee functions, including the provision of administrative support to the Animal Cruelty Investigation Advisory Board. Last session, Vermont charged this board with providing training and certification to animal control officers in the state. AKC GR supports this work.

Vermont – [HB 250](#) would impose a strict liability standard for injury caused by domestic dogs. More than 30 states have this standard. The House Committee on Judiciary is reviewing the measure.

Vermont – [HB 622](#) would require the Office of Professional Regulation to license service dog trainers that provide service dog training services to individuals with a disability. AKC GR is monitoring this bill.

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[Link to Online & Free “Responsible Dog Ownership” Lesson Plans For Grades K-12](#)

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