

New England State Issues March 2022

By [AKC Government Relations](#)

Mar 21, 2022 |

News from the New England State Capitols

Connecticut – The Connecticut animal advocates caucus has introduced [HB 5170](#), which would establish requirements for the adequate sheltering of dogs and add additional requirements concerning the tethering of dogs. After a public hearing by the Joint Planning and Development Committee on Friday, February 25, 2022 the committee [amended HB 5170](#) to prevent dogs from being left outside without shelter for more than 15 minutes after a National Weather Service advisory is issued, unless accompanied by a person. The bill then received a favorable vote.

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Connecticut – [SB 141](#) would amend the animal cruelty statute by elevating the intentional injury of any animal while in the performance of its duties under the supervision of law enforcement, or any dog performing for a volunteer search and rescue team, to a class C felony. Current law classifies the killing of these animals as a class C felony, but intentional injury is only classified as Class D, the least serious type of felony. AKC GR submitted testimony to the Joint Public Safety and Security Committee on March 3, supporting SB 141 for its potential to deter harm to these working dogs. The bill was voted favorably and sent to the Judiciary Committee.

Connecticut – [SB 234](#) would make significant changes to kennel and dog licensing laws. AKC GR understands the intent of the changes are to update and modernize processes, but issued [an alert](#) outlining concerns with the bill and expressed them at the Joint Environment Committee public hearing on March 7, 2022.

Connecticut – [HB 5232](#) Concerning Service Animals is supported by AKC GR because it would update Connecticut's laws to ensure its terms and definitions are consistent with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The bill is a reflection of work done by a 2019 workgroup that AKC GR participated in. The committee voted it favorably March 8.

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. 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. AKC GR has been invited to a celebratory signing on April 12, 2022.

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 – 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, but noted that definitions for animal shelter and rescue in the bill were inconsistent with current law. The committee advanced the bill favorably on February 3, 2022. HB 901 is on the House calendar for consideration.

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 – [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. Supporters of HB 305 held a protest at the Statehouse on March 10, 2022 to object.

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 – [LD 1828](#) would require the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to contract a third-party for the administration of the Companion Animal Sterilization Fund. and [LD 1744](#). After a public hearing on January 20, 2022, the bill was passed in the House on March 9.

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 the committee is making minor changes to bill before advancing it.

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. It 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 raised constitutional issues among other problems at the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources public hearing held on January 11, 2022.

New Hampshire – [HB 1004](#) would make failure to provide your contact information after a dog injures another person a misdemeanor crime. AKC GR expressed concerns that although this bill is intended to promote responsible dog ownership, 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. The House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee considered the bill on January 28, 2022 and voted it Inexpedient to Legislate on March 9.

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 voted it Inexpedient to Legislate.

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 – Representative Gallager 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 worked with the committee on an appropriate amendment. HB 1186 was voted ought to pass as amended on March 7.

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 voted it Inexpedient to Legislate on March 9.

New Hampshire – [HB 1327](#) supported by AKC GR, 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. The Senate Health and Human Services Committee has scheduled a public hearing on HB 1327 for March 16 and AKC GR will testify in support.

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. AKC GR supports the measure. The Governor signed it into law on February 26, 2022.

Rhode Island – [SB 2227](#) and **[HB 7678](#)** have been re-filed for consideration this session. The bills 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 are in opposition. HB 7678 had a public hearing before the House Judiciary Committee on March 10 and AKC GR and the Rhode Island kennel clubs expressed opposition given it would change the property legal status of animals and provide non-human legal rights instead. The bill has been held for further study.

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 and the Committee voted on March 10 that it ought to pass.

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.

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. The House Judiciary public hearing is March 10, 2022. The bill has been held for further study.

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 and submitted written testimony for the House Judiciary public hearing on March 10. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [HB 7785](#) would authorize the director of the department of environmental management to establish quarantine zones for animals and would permit the examination of any quarantined animal therein. AKC GR submitted testimony in support of the measure for the March 10, 2022 public hearing by the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. The bill has been held for further study.

Vermont – [SB 155](#) would reorganize public safety services within the Executive Branch and create the Agency of Public Safety to oversee functions, including 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. Before releasing the bill favorably, the Senate Government Operations Committee [amended SB 155](#) and included a requirement that state agencies review domestic animal welfare oversight responsibilities and make recommendations for legislation to ensure public health and safety. SB 155 as amended is now under consideration by the Senate Appropriations Committee. AKC GR and the Vermont Federation of Dog Clubs support 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.

Vermont – [SB 129](#) proposes to transfer the authority to adopt rules for the taking of fish, wildlife, and fur-bearing animals from the Fish and Wildlife Board to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. It would also amend the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Board so that it serves in an advisory capacity only, to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. This bill was carried over from last year and has resulted in considerable debate during March 2022 by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy. Sporting and hunting stakeholders are concerned these changes weaken the role of board appointees representing counties from across the state. AKC is monitoring the bill.

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