

New England State Issues May 2022

By [AKC Government Relations](#)

Please share with your networks....

Connecticut – [HB 5170](#) 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 February 25, 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 House passed the bill on April 29 and the Senate approved the bill as amended by the House on May 3. The Governor signed it on May 10, as [Public Act 22-59](#).

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. SB 141 failed when the session adjourned on May 4.

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. In response, the committee chose not to advance SB 234 but, [amended HB 5295](#) to establish a working group at the Department of Agriculture to address concerns raised at the public hearing. AKC GR has been invited to participate and issued [the following update](#). HB 5295 passed the House and the Senate before it was signed into law on May 10 as [Public Act 22-54](#).

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 and the House passed it April 19. The Senate then sent HB 5232 to the Human Services Committee and the bill failed sine die when the session adjourned on May 4.

Connecticut – Among other provisions, [HB 5498](#) would designate the shelter pet as Connecticut’s state pet. AKC GR posted [information](#) about the bill’s hearing on March 25. After hearing support and opposition to this provision, the Joint Government Administration and Elections Committee voted to place HB 5498 on the House consent calendar where it passed on April 28. The Senate did not take action on the bill prior to adjournment of the legislative session and the bill failed sine die on May 4.

Maine – LD 1885 “An Act to Increase Maine’s Veterinary Workforce” would expand a loan program 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 and the committee made minor changes to bill. AKC GR has submitted a letter of support for [LD 1885, as amended](#), and issued [an alert](#) encouraging emails in support of passage before the session closed on April 20, 2022. The bill was pared back to add just one additional loan for a veterinarian who commits to practicing critical care and emergency services, but increased the yearly loan amounts from \$25,000 to \$35,000 per student per year up to four years before passage. Governor Janet Mills signed it as [Chapter 725 of the Acts of 2022](#) on May 3.

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 municipal animal control officers to tell residents how many dogs or cats they can own after an inspection of their premises upon kennel license application.

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. The bill was reported favorably by committee and referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means.

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](#), but noted that definitions for animal shelter and rescue in the bill were inconsistent with current law. The committee advanced the bill favorably. HB 901 is on the House calendar for consideration and AKC GR has highlighted the inconsistency with House leaders.

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, 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 and is in the Senate Rules Committee waiting for placement on the Senate calendar.

Massachusetts – [SB 2672](#) was released favorably 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.

Massachusetts – [HB 4700](#) was introduced by the House Ways and Means Committee as the proposed state budget and more than 1,500 amendments were filed for consideration. Amendment #294 would have established an animal abuser registry with requirements easily evaded and serious penalties for transferring an animal to anyone listed. AKC submitted a letter expressing concerns with the text and the amendment was subsequently withdrawn by the sponsor.

New Hampshire – [SB 368](#) was 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. The committee amended bill to establish a hearing officer revolving fund and fines of up to \$5,000 for any second or subsequent violation of the pet vendor license laws. [Amended SB 368](#) passed the Senate in March. The House Environment and Agriculture Committee hosted public hearings where AKC GR and NH DOGS expressed opposition. Before the committee's favorable vote, [an amendment](#) was adopted striking the \$5000 fine increase, and capping the revolving fund at \$75,000 which reflects the annual amount of fines already collected. Further, the amendment establishes administrative fines for anyone transferring a dog, cat or ferret without the health certificate already required by law.

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, 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 Gallagher reached out to AKC GR for assistance with his bill, HB 1186. It would mandate that emergency shelters allow individuals to relocate with their companion animals when ordered to evacuate. Per NH's Disaster Animal Response Team, four emergency trailers across the state can be deployed, but significant gaps in the emergency response plan exist. AKC GR testified in support of the bill's intent and worked with the committee on an appropriate amendment to require emergency shelters make space for trailers or other pet accommodations on site. [HB 1186, as amended](#), has passed the House and Senate. AKC GR submitted a letter of support. The bill is being forwarded to the Governor.

New Hampshire – [HB 1327](#) supported by AKC GR, would include diabetes in the conditions listed for eligibility for a service animal. The bill passed the House, and AKC GR submitted testimony in support at the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill was signed by the Governor as [Chapter 26 of the Acts of 2022](#).

Rhode Island – [S. 2443](#) would authorize forfeiture of any animal seized by the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RISPCA) if the defendant is found guilty and fails to reimburse RISPCA within 30 days for the boarding and care of animals held pending court proceedings. AKC GR issued [an alert](#) noting the lack of protections for one who is found innocent and testified on April 27 before the Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture requesting amendments. The committee proposed and adopted an [amended S. 2443](#) responding to AKC concerns and the Senate passed the amended bill on May 17.

Rhode Island – [S. 2227](#) and [H. 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. H. 7678 has been held for further study. On May 12, the Senate Judiciary scheduled S. 2227 for public hearing and AKC testified in opposition on a panel with RI ACLU. This bill has also been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 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 to the House Judiciary Committee in early 2022. It has been held for further study. A Senate companion bill, [S. 2701](#) had a public hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on May 12 and AKC testified in opposition on a panel with RI ACLU. This bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 7021](#) would authorize the emergency treatment and transport of a police K9 injured in the line of duty. AKC GR supports this bill. AKC GR issued [an alert](#) requesting support before the public hearing by the House Health and Human Services Committee. The committee added stakeholders to assist with establishing policies and procedures and passed [H. 7021 as amended](#). AKC GR issued [an alert](#) in support and the bill passed the House on May 3, 2022.

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 that the House Judiciary Committee reserve this legal term for children only. The bill has been held for further study.

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 and the Committee voted that it ought to pass. The House passed H. 7087 and it was sent to Senate Judiciary committee for review.

Rhode Island – [H. 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. The bill had a hearing and has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 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 held a public hearing. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 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. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 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 public hearing by the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. The bill was reported favorably and passed by the House on March 17 before being sent to the Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee. AKC GR submitted testimony in support when the Senate Committee received public testimony on [S. 2751](#), identical to H. 7785. S. 2751 passed the Senate on May 3.

Rhode Island – [H. 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. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [S. 2121](#) is intended to protect the welfare of animals left unattended in motor vehicles by expanding law enforcement officers' current authority to rescue an animal in distress. If enacted, an officer would have the authority to maintain custody of the animal for 72 hours or until a court hearing was scheduled where the court may refuse to return custody of the animal to the owner. AKC GR submitted testimony for the March 29 public hearing by the Senate Judiciary Committee expressing concerns that, as written, the bill violates due process protections governing personal property. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [S. 2651](#) was filed to ban the import of large animals into the state for canned hunting activities by defining and prohibiting "captive hunting". The definition expressly excludes the release of upland game birds for hunting, but AKC GR and the Northeast Beagle Gundog Federation have concerns that the text may unintentionally harm lawful beagle training and field trials with rabbits. Both AKC GR and the Federation submitted testimony with a recommendation to also expressly exclude these

activities in the text of S. 2651 for the Senate Judiciary hearing. 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. AKC GR and the Vermont Federation of Dog Clubs support this work and [an alert](#) was issued. SB 155 as amended was passed by the Senate and was sent to the House Government Operations Committee. AKC GR submitted a letter of support. With no action in the House on SB 155, the Senate moved on May 3 to amend HB 729 with text establishing the animal welfare protections and unification of government functions and the bill was then sent to the House Judiciary Committee for acceptance. The amendment text can be viewed on page 4187 of the Senate’s May 3 calendar, posted [here](#). AKC GR issued [this alert](#) requesting emails in support to the House Judiciary Committee, which made minor changes to the text and sent it back to the full Senate. The Senate unanimously concurred with these changes on May 10. The bill now goes to the governor. [Read more.](#)

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 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.