

New England State Capitol Updates February 2023

Connecticut – On February 16, the Judiciary Committee raised [SB 1060](#) that would expand the court’s authority to appoint an attorney to represent animals generally. The goal of animal rights activists is to give animals the same rights and privileges as people by changing the legal classification of animals from property to “legal beings”. Although the concept of individual animal advocates may sound benevolent, in practice it can create problems that undermine the larger goals of animal welfare. AKC opposes SB 1060. Learn more [here](#).

Connecticut – [HB 6714](#) would redefine the crime of sexual contact with an animal, require that veterinarians report suspected incidents of animal cruelty, and prohibit persons convicted of animal cruelty or having sexual contact with an animal from possessing or working with animals for a period of five years. AKC is concerned the proposed definition of “sexual contact with an animal” could be interpreted as prohibiting routine canine reproduction procedures, such as artificial insemination and will seek an amendment to clarify the text.

Connecticut – [SB 1069](#) would make many changes to the domestic animal laws. The definition of “animal” would be expanded, licensed “grooming facility” would now include any vehicle or trailer and the definition of “kennel” which allows for personal kennels would be removed. Instead, SB 1069 would establish that any owner who breeds more than two litters of dogs annually must apply to the town clerk where their “facility” is located for a breeding kennel license. Municipal animal control officers, instead of the Department of Agriculture, would be responsible for inspections and the enforcement of newly detailed care and conditions.

Connecticut – Established in [Public Act No. 22-54](#), the Department of Agriculture convened a workgroup to explore a state-wide dog license portal last year. AKC and the Connecticut Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners (CFDRDO) participated along with other stakeholders. The Department submitted draft legislation raised by the Joint Environment Committee as [HB 6611](#). An additional benefit of the electronic dog license portal proposed is a flat dog license fee whether a dog is intact or not. The Department requested the committee make changes to HB 6611 to mirror the working group’s draft and AKC and CFDRDO submitted testimony in support of those changes for the public hearing on February 15. AKC testified and has asked the committee add text to ensure personally identifiable information in the database will be kept confidential.

Connecticut – [HB 5450](#) would prohibit discrimination in insurance underwriting based on the breed of a homeowner's dog. Representative Nuccio has filed this bill after successfully getting a model act adopted by the National Council of Insurance Lawmakers last year. AKC sent [an alert](#) noting these protections had been raised by committee for a hearing February 16 as [HB 6635](#). AKC, multiple dog clubs and members submitted testimony in support together with the Connecticut Federation.

Connecticut – [HB 5469](#) would facilitate the annual licensing of dogs by requiring by businesses concerned with the care of dog to provide information about licensing laws,.

Connecticut – [HB 5215](#) would establish a taskforce, including a representative of AKC, to develop recommendations for legislation to address the epidemic of domestic dog attacks in the state and to expedite appeals of animal control officer orders and minimize the time impounded animals are held at taxpayer expense. The Environment committee raised the bill for consideration. AKC testified in support at the public hearing on February 15 and requested that CFDRDO be added to the taskforce.

Connecticut – [HB 5109](#) and [SB 75](#) would authorize the emergency treatment and transport of police K9s injured in the line of duty. The Committee on Public Safety and Security has drafted an omnibus bill, [SB 932](#), which includes this authority and other provisions to protect law enforcement K-9s. AKC issued an [alert in support](#) on February 3, 2023 and the committee received AKC written testimony for the hearing February 14.

Connecticut – [SB 729](#) would establish the Siberian Husky as the CT state dog. AKC submitted a letter of support to the committee.

Connecticut – [SB 53](#) would require veterinarians to report suspected cases of animal cruelty and neglect to the state. The Joint Committee on Environment held a public hearing on January 30, 2023, and AKC is monitoring the measure.

Connecticut – [SB 309](#) would make the dog licensing fees equitable between dogs that are spayed or neutered and dogs that are not spayed or neutered. The bill sponsor has indicated they will also support this provision in the Department of Agriculture's state-wide dog license portal legislation, [HB 6611](#).

Connecticut – [SB 976](#) would mandate health insurance coverage for certain conditions, including the need to purchase a trained service animal. AKC supports the training and use of dogs by humans, whose lives are enriched by dogs' performing essential services and submitted written testimony in support for the February 14 public hearing. See [alert](#) for more details..

Maine – [LD 157](#) would require the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to adopt rules that set standards for animal rescue entities that specify staff-to-animal ratios and that govern animals that are returned multiple times and resold or placed in multiple homes. At the February 23 work session, testimony highlighted the lack of enforcement until crisis situations arise.

Maine – [LD 350](#) prohibits the cancellation or nonrenewal of a property insurance policy solely on the basis of a policyholder's ownership of certain breeds of dogs. The bill . also prohibits an increase in the premium for the policy. [An alert](#) has been issued, and AK GR testified in support at a February 14 hearing. Opposition to the bill came from the insurance industry and the committee has requested the industry share what evidence they use to determine dog breed risk analysis.

Maine – [LD 679](#) would require a tenant to designate an authorized person to retrieve an animal from the tenant's rental unit in the event of the tenant's death or incapacitation or the tenant's abandonment of the animal. The bill also requires the landlord to surrender the animal to an animal shelter, an animal control officer or a police officer if the authorized person fails to retrieve the animal. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

Massachusetts – [HD 2483](#) would provide consumer protections at dog day care businesses and is supported by multiple animal welfare organizations, including AKC.

Massachusetts – [HD 2497](#) has been re-filed as "Ollie's Law" and would impose requirements such as staffing ratios for boarding, training, dog day care, breeding and personal kennels. AKC is opposed to the bill's one size fits all approach and is monitoring it closely.

Massachusetts – [SD 2136](#) would, among other provisions, require a minimum of 100 square feet per dog for outdoor enclosures and ban the kenneling of any dog outside

unattended for more than 5 hours or from 10pm to 6am. AKC opposes the measure as introduced.

Massachusetts – [HD 2938](#) is a re-filed bill that would require pet groomers be licensed by the state and comply with regulations related to the safety, sanitation and operation of a pet grooming business. AKC is concerned that the proposed definition of “pet groomer” does not make an exception for professional dog handlers traveling to Massachusetts to exhibit a dog.

Massachusetts – [HD 2216](#) would ban animal testing of cosmetic products when an alternative test method is available.

New Hampshire – [SB 268](#) would allow for pre-hospital treatment and transportation for police canines injured in the line of duty. It has been referred to the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

New Hampshire – [HB 37](#) is a re-filed bill that would establish a study on best practices for companion animal groomers. At the February 7 public hearing, lawmakers expressed a desire to ensure animals’ safety and groomer compliance with best practices without having to create a state occupational license. The House Environment and Agriculture Committee members are considering solutions.

New Hampshire – [HB 258](#) would establish a certification for animal chiropractors and require veterinary referral. Amendments are in process and will be considered at an executive session scheduled for February 8.

New Hampshire – [HB 230](#) would direct the department of agriculture, markets, and food to employ an electronic data processing system for all registrations under its purview. It appears this would result in an expansion to the state pet vendor license database that is out for bid. It was voted ought to pass by the Executive Departments and Administration Committee and has been sent to Finance Committee.

New Hampshire – [HB 141](#) would authorize dogs off leash on certain hiking trails and state parks so long as owner has leash and dog in voice or physical control at all times. The Resources, Recreation and Development Committee held a public hearing on January 18, 2023.

New Hampshire – [HB 260](#) would prohibit the operation of motor vehicles by drivers with animals on their laps or in contact. Comments regarding exceptions for service dogs and dogs suffering an emergency on the way to the veterinarian have been submitted by residents. At a January 31 executive session of the House Committee on Transportation, the bill was voted inexpedient to legislate by a majority of members.

New Hampshire – [HB 249](#) would establish regulatory standards for the pet insurance industry. It has been referred to the House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Affairs and a public hearing occurred on January 31.

New Hampshire – In addition to defining biodiversity and requiring its inclusion in certain land use regulations, [SB 164](#) would authorize entering into private contracts for “guardianship” appointments to preserve the rights of domestic animals and wild animals. AKC issued [an alert](#) in opposition. AKC was joined by New Hampshire Dog Owners of the Granite State (NH DOGS) and multiple stakeholders testifying in opposition to the guardianship provisions of the bill. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee significantly [amended the bill](#) and removed the guardianship text before voting it ought to pass on February 15.

Rhode Island – [HB 5114](#) would permit the family court to award custody of household pets to the plaintiff in a domestic abuse complaint, including the enforcement remedy of a restraining order or other injunctive relief.

Rhode Island – [HB 5207](#) is a re-filed bill that would establish an animal abuser registry and require pet sellers to check the registry before transferring an animal to avoid fines. Everyone can agree that animals deserve a life in a safe, caring, and healthy environment. However, registries can be easily evaded and no evidence suggests they are effective at reducing the rate of subsequent offenses. AKC believes a better use of the State’s resources than establishing and maintaining a separate registry would be to focus on and utilize enforcement activities that are proven effective and provided this testimony on February 14 before the House Judiciary Committee with other stakeholders.

Rhode Island – Elimination of the sales tax for taxi and pet services, such as grooming and boarding, would occur if [SB 83](#) were enacted. AKC supports the bill.

Vermont – [HB 57](#) is a re-filed measure that was introduced to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs on January 27. The bill would require a dog trainer to inform a client of the methods and equipment that would be used to train a client’s dog and of the risks and benefits of those methods and equipment before obtaining the client’s consent to move forward. AKC is monitoring the bill closely.

Vermont – [Act 147 Report, Section 38](#) was filed by the Vermont Department of Public Safety with the House Government Operations, as required by passage of H. 729 last session. The report outlines a plan, and draft legislation, to unify domestic animal welfare and related public safety functions across state government. AKC and the Vermont Federation of Dog Clubs are currently reviewing and discussing the report details.

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