

# New England State Issues June 2023

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**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, CFDRDO and veterinarians expressed concern the proposed definition of “sexual contact with an animal” could be interpreted as prohibiting routine canine reproduction procedures, such as artificial insemination. The Judiciary Committee voted favorably on an [amended HB 6714](#) that ensures that bona fide veterinary and animal husbandry purposes would not be inadvertently banned. The bill passed both the House and Senate and was sent to the Governor on June 25.

**Connecticut** – SB 1069 would expand the definition of “animal”, expand licensed “grooming facility” to include any vehicle or trailer, and remove the definition of “kennel” allowing for personal kennels. It would require a kennel license for anyone who breeds more than two litters annually. Municipal animal control officers, instead of the Department of Agriculture, would be responsible for inspections and the enforcement of new detailed care and conditions. AKC and the state federation worked on amendments that preserved the definition of “kennel”, did not expand the definition of “grooming facility”, and that removed any hobby breeder reference as a “facility” to be adopted before the measure advanced. Legislator leaders further amended the bill to only require inspection and kennel licensure for those producing more than five litters in year. On June 5, the Governor was sent [Public Act No. 23-17](#) and it was signed into law.

**Connecticut** – SB 729 would establish the Husky as the Connecticut state dog. AKC submitted a letter of support to the committee. An omnibus bill including this provision was raised as [HB 6822](#) and heard in March. The bill was voted favorably out of committee and was on the House calendar for consideration but, the session adjourned June 7 without further action.

**Connecticut** – The Department of Agriculture submitted HB 6611 to consider a statewide dog license portal. An additional benefit of the electronic dog license portal proposed is a flat dog license fee whether a dog is intact or not. The platform will allow confidentiality for individuals with privacy protections in place. An [amended HB 6611](#) supported by AKC GR was referred to Committee on Appropriations on April 25. The Department was unable to secure funding in the state budget bill and the session adjourned June 7 without the amended bill advancing.

**Maine** – [LD 1234](#) would require the Department of Public Safety to reimburse authorized handlers of retired law enforcement dogs that were used in service by the State Police up to \$5,000 per year for health care expenses of their dogs. AKC supported the bill, which was approved by the Joint Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety [as amended](#) to cover all retired law enforcement K9s. In June the expanded bill quickly passed the House and Senate before being sent on June 14 to the special appropriations table for funding consideration.

**Maine** – [LD 598](#) would make it a civil violation for an operator of a motor vehicle to fail to report an accident with a cat, a dog or livestock to a law enforcement officer or to the owner of the animal by the quickest means available. A violation after 3 or more violations within the previous 5-year period would amount to a Class E crime. The Transportation Committee released the bill favorably [as amended](#) to define an accident as “death of an animal or damage to real or personal property” and the House passed it on June 6 and the Senate voted it favorably on June 12.

**Massachusetts** – [SB 1056](#) 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. [Read](#) more.

**Massachusetts** – In response to dog injuries and deaths at dog day care facilities, [HB 2019](#) and [SB 1309](#) have 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. They also would create a new definition for “personal breeder kennel” as anyone with more than 4 intact female dogs who transfers any offspring. Personal breeder kennels and commercial breeder kennels would be held to the same future regulations. They have been referred to the Joint Municipalities and Regional Government Committee and a public hearing has been tentatively scheduled for September 12.

**Massachusetts** – [HB 314](#) would provide consumer protections at dog day care businesses and is supported by multiple animal welfare organizations, including AKC. It has been referred to the Joint Municipalities and Regional Government Committee and a public hearing has been tentatively scheduled for September 12.

**Massachusetts** – [SB 1311](#) would eliminate from current law text that exempts from pet shop licensure any person selling, exchanging or otherwise transferring the offspring of their personally owned animals. It has been referred to the Joint Municipalities and

Regional Government Committee and a public hearing has been tentatively scheduled for September 12.

**New Hampshire** – [SB 268](#) would allow for pre-hospital treatment and transportation for police canines injured in the line of duty. AKC and many others testified in support of the bill throughout the process. An amended version passed the House on May 4 and the Senate concurred with the amended bill on June 1. Learn more in this [update](#).

**New Hampshire** – [HB 249](#) would establish regulatory standards for the pet insurance industry. The House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Affairs held a hearing on [an amendment](#) to allow restaurant owners to keep their dog on the premises. The bill passed the House on March 22 and the Senate on May 11.

**Rhode Island** – [HB 5918](#) is a refiled measure that would create an ownership procedure for pets in divorce and separation proceedings based on the best interests of the animal. This act would not apply to assistance/service animals. AKC worked with the bill sponsor to substitute “ownership” for the word “custody”. It is being held for study.

**Rhode Island** – [HB 5864](#) would define and prohibit “captive hunting” for domestic or wild animals in enclosed areas. AKC is working with the bill proponent to clarify the text and ensure no negative consequences for legal field trial activities. The Senate filed a mirror bill, [SB 607](#), that had a public hearing on May 17. AKC submitted testimony requesting the same clarifying amendment and is working with bill proponents to get it adopted.

**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. AKC expressed concerns about using the legal term “custody”, given the three types of child custody. It is being held for study.

**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 would be to focus on and utilize enforcement activities that are proven effective and provided this testimony before the House Judiciary Committee with other stakeholders. The bill is being studied.

**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, and it was referred to the Senate Finance Committee. The bill has been passed by the House and Senate.

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