

New England State Capitol Issues August 2024

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 would authorize animal control officers to inspect and tell you how many dogs you are allowed to own and enforce a new “personal breeder kennel” license for anyone with more than 4 intact female dogs over 6 months who transfers any offspring. Personal breeder kennels and commercial breeder kennels would be held to the same future regulations. Details are in AKC’s [alert](#). The Joint Municipalities and Regional Government Committee favorably released Senate and House companion mirror bills, [HB 4564](#) and [SB 2731](#), which have moved to their respective Ways and Means Committees. AKC is appreciative the committee removed the anti-breeder text from the bill. More details are [here](#). On July 25, House Ways and Means released an amended bill, [HB 4919](#) and passed it. The Senate then inserted new text for HB 4919 as [SB 2929](#) and passed it. Differences are detailed [here](#). The measure awaits further action from the House Committee on Bills in Third Reading. The Legislature ended formal lawmaking for the year on August 1 and it’s unclear if the bill will advance during the informal session that ends December 31, 2024.

Massachusetts – [SB 876/HB 1367](#) would prohibit housing authorities and certain housing agreements from discriminating against tenants based upon the size, weight or breed of dog owned. They also prohibit insurance companies from discriminating based upon dog breed. The bills were referred to the Joint Committee on Housing, which gave HB 1367 a favorable recommendation in March and is now pending in the Committee on House Ways and Means. AKC supports the bill. The Legislature ended formal lawmaking for the year on August 1 and this bill did not advance.

Massachusetts – [HB 747](#), [HB 826](#), [SB 549](#), and [SB 550](#) would require Massachusetts licensed pet shops or future pet shops to only provide the public with dogs and cats sourced from animal shelter or rescue organizations. In AKC’s experience, the number of puppies produced by responsible breeders does not satisfy demand. Shelter and rescue animals are not the best option for every family that wants a pet. AKC issued [an alert](#) and provided testimony in opposition to these bills at the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources’ public hearing. AKC is opposed and issued [an update](#). The bill was re-drafted and voted favorably as [SB 2820](#) before being sent to the Senate Ways and Means Committee. The Legislature ended formal lawmaking for the year on August 1 and this bill did not advance.

Massachusetts – [HB 4241](#) is an abuse and exploitation prevention bill that would also define “coercive control” allowing issuance of restraining orders when a person commits or threatens to commit cruelty or abuse to animals connected to the family or household member. AKC supports the bill. It passed the House and was amended in the Senate Ways and Means Committee before being released for further amendment and adoption by the full Senate as [SB 2703](#). A conference committee resolved differences in the two bills and released [HB 4744](#) which was enacted and signed by the Governor as [Chapter 118 of the Acts of 2024](#).

Massachusetts – [HB 1718](#) and [SB 1142](#) would establish a taskforce of Massachusetts lawyers and MSPCA/ARL-Boston to review cruelty laws and make recommendations including whether to establish a domestic animal cruelty misdemeanor charge; prohibit sale of animals under 8 weeks and transferring animals roadside with few exceptions; and allow for animal seizure and owner’s payment of board pending court action for suspected neglect. AKC testified in support of the humane care provisions of the bills and requested the committee ensure due process protections and consistent terminology. The Joint Judiciary Committee released a re-draft, now [SB 2757](#), that narrows the bill’s scope to prohibit selling of animals under 8 weeks and transferring animals roadside with few exceptions. The Senate Rules Committee amended and favorably released the measure on July 29 as [SB 2908](#). The amendment also prohibits animal shelters and rescues from transferring animals under 8 weeks of age. After Senate passage, SB 2908 was referred to the committee on House Steering, Policy and Scheduling. The Legislature ended formal lawmaking for the year on August 1, but the bill advanced during an August 26 informal House session and may make it to the Governor’s desk before December 31, 2024.

Massachusetts – As introduced in 2023, [SB 190](#) would prohibit the declawing of cats unless a therapeutic reason offered by a veterinarian deemed it necessary and performed the surgery. After a favorable report by the Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure it was sent to Senate Ways and Means Committee. In January, SB 190 was amended and released as [SB 2552](#) before passage in the Senate. SB 2552 is before the House Ways and Means Committee and would prohibit the declawing of animals unless a therapeutic reason offered by a veterinarian deemed it necessary to perform the procedure. AKC believes injury preventing canine dewclaw removal on puppies less than five days would be considered cruelty and has expressed these concerns. On June 24 a House amendment to H. 4789 was filed with text removing AKC’s concerns by clarifying that the ban would pertain only to cats. The amendment was not adopted. The Legislature ended formal lawmaking for the year on August 1 and SB 2552 did not advance.

Stacey Ober, J.D.

Government Relations Regional Manager, New England



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

t: 919-816-3348 | e: stacey.ober@akc.org

AKC's website: www.akc.org

AKC GR's website: www.akcgr.org