

New England State Capitol Issues January 2025

Connecticut – [S.B.166](#) would impose penalties to prevent fraud and abuse by persons claiming to have service animals. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Human Services.

Connecticut – [S.B.182](#) would authorize use of health savings or flexible spending accounts for veterinary expenses. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Insurance and Real Estate.

Connecticut – [S.B.272](#) and [S.B. 267](#) would allowing emergency medical services personnel to provide emergency treatment and transportation to police animals injured under certain circumstances. These have been assigned to the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Security.

Connecticut – [H.B.5055](#) would allow veterinarians to deviate from standard vaccine dosage protocols when it is deemed beneficial for the health and well-being of the animal, including permitting veterinarians to use a rabies antibody titer test to assess whether an animal requires a rabies booster vaccine. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Public Health.

Connecticut – [S.B. 342](#) would amend the general statutes to limit the liability of municipalities for injuries that occur in skateboard parks or dog parks that they maintain. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

Maine – Three dog related bills are anticipated for 2025 consideration: establishing a certified rabies vaccinator role; authorizing the Animal Welfare Advisory Council to create subcommittees that can fulfill

council responsibilities; and creating a new state “kennel” license, in addition to the current “municipal kennel license,” for any person with 5 or more dogs kept in a single location under one ownership for breeding, hunting, show, training, field trials, sledding, competition or exhibition purposes. AKC will provide more information when the text is available.

Maine – [L.D. 133](#) would amend the laws regarding nuisance dogs. AKC is monitoring and will provide more information when available.

Maine – [L.D. 88](#) would update penalties for violating the laws governing agriculture and animals and the Maine weights and measures law. AKC is monitoring and will provide more information when available.

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 went to 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 expressed concerns that injury preventing canine dewclaw removal on puppies less than five days would be considered cruelty under the bill and requested an amendment to preserve this traditional animal husbandry practice. 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, but on December 30 House Ways and Means adopted amendment [H.5160](#) limiting the bill’s scope to

cats and it was quickly agreed to by the Senate. The bill was signed into law and is now [Chapter 345 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 on December 30 the House enacted SB 2908 and it was quickly enacted by the Senate and the Governor signed it into law January 8.

Massachusetts – [SD 134](#) would impose restrictions on individuals convicted of animal abuse by prohibiting them from owning or accessing animals for a specified period. For a first offense, the prohibition lasts at least five years from the date of conviction or release from custody, whichever is later, and extends to at least fifteen years for subsequent offenses.

Massachusetts – [H.D.383](#) would establish The Massachusetts Veterans Service Dog Program.

Massachusetts – [S.D.133](#) would standardize courts' consideration of pets in divorce and separation by allowing "joint custody". AKC believes as property, the court ought to use the legal term "ownership" instead of "custody" which applies to children.

Massachusetts – [H.D.336](#) would impose a temporary possession ban of animals for animal abusers.

Massachusetts – [H.D.419](#) would require veterinarians seeking license renewal to provide evidence of completing continuing education as required by the board's regulations. For veterinarians who have temporarily retired or moved out of the state, it would allow for up to re-registration within 5 years by paying the lapsed license fee and submitting an affidavit.

Massachusetts – [S.D.189](#) would focus on the protection and valuation of pets, specifically cats and dogs, including fair monetary value of the deceased animal to its owner, compensation for the loss of comfort, protection, companionship, and other special damages such as the recovery of reasonable afterlife expenses, court costs, and attorney's fees.

New Hampshire – LSR 2025-1090 would amend the animal cruelty statute at RSA to 644:8 to insert a definition for "torture". AKC will provide more information when the bill text is available.

New Hampshire – [HB240](#) would remove the penalty for non-payment of dog licenses.

New Hampshire – [HB 86](#) would increase the cost of service for notice of civil forfeiture of unlicensed dogs to the rate for certified mail.

New Hampshire – [HB250](#) would enable local governing bodies to regulate the muzzling of dogs.

New Hampshire – [HB153](#) would require that two or more law enforcement officers in each county receive training regarding animal cruelty.

New Hampshire – [HB262](#) would impact the group licenses for dogs by raising certain licensing fees and limiting the number of dogs allowed by a holder of a group license.

New Hampshire – [HB267](#) would exempt individuals with degrees in veterinary medicine or chiropractics who have completed a nationally recognized animal chiropractic program from veterinary licensure requirements.

New Hampshire – [HB272](#) would exempt certain agricultural practices from municipal quiet hours.

New Hampshire – [HB 202](#) would make changes to the Duties of the Fish and Game Commission.

New Hampshire – [SB 32](#) would make changes to the Fish and Game Commission. The bill Ought to Pass Committee with Amendment.

New Hampshire – [S.B.50](#) would establish a committee to study the regulation of private animal boarding facilities.

Vermont – [H.14](#) would prohibit the use of animals in product testing.