

# New England State Issues February 2025

**Connecticut** – [H.B.5902](#) An Act Concerning the Breeding of Animals in the State would regulate the breeding of animals within the state by mandating that individuals or companies involved in breeding activities be registered with the Department of Agriculture which would establish comprehensive guidelines for animal breeding practices, develop and maintain a breeder registry, and collect registration fees from breeders. AKC has contacted the sponsor who indicated that she is concerned about overpopulation at Connecticut shelters.

**Connecticut** – [H.B.6998](#) would require the licensing of dogs every three years instead of annually and would continue to impose the current fees that are higher for intact dogs. A public hearing will be scheduled.

**Connecticut** – [HB 6964](#) would create a taskforce to study what provisions could be made in certain circumstances to allow emergency medical services personnel to provide emergency treatment and transportation to an injured police K-9. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted testimony in support for the February 18 public hearing.

**Connecticut** – [HB 6277](#) mandates that animal breeders and animal testing facilities must offer dogs, cats, rabbits, and guinea pigs, which are no longer needed and do not pose a health or safety risk, for adoption. The Joint Environment Committee voted on February 10 to draft the bill. A public hearing will be scheduled.

**Connecticut** – [HB 6832](#) would authorize municipalities to adopt local ordinances banning the retail sale of dogs, cats and rabbits. AKC issued [an alert](#) that the Joint Planning and Development Committee was accepting testimony February 3 and testified in opposition.

**Connecticut** – [HB 5112](#) An Act Prohibiting Certain Sales and Leases of Dogs, Cats and Rabbits in Retail Pet Stores was voted January 22 by the Joint General Law Committee to be drafted and was considered on February 10. AKC

issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition. Similarly, [HB 6240](#), [HB 6255](#), [HB 5909](#) and [HB 5138](#) are bills designed to further regulate pet stores that have been sent to the Joint Environment Committee for consideration.

**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 allow 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** – [L.D. 133](#) would amend the laws regarding nuisance dogs. AKC issued [an alert](#) noting the proposed text conflicts with municipal authority by including barking dogs in the law addressing dangerous dogs. AKC testified in opposition at the February 6 public hearing by the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The committee has received 100 [written testimonies](#) primarily in support of tools to effectively solve barking dog issues.

**Maine** – [LD 308](#) would amend the laws governing the Animal Welfare Advisory Council to enhance the administrative functions of the council by allowing it to hold regular public meetings at least every other month, with the option to waive a succeeding meeting by a majority vote. The chair would be empowered to call special meetings upon written request by two or more members and authorized to delegate duties to council members individually or through the formation of subcommittees. The Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry has scheduled a hearing for February 27.

**Maine** – [LD 498](#) would mandate the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to establish rules for animal rescue entities, with a particular focus on dog rescue operations. According to the bill sponsor, an animal rescue operator has 30 to 40 dogs in their home they are incapable of adequately caring for and the state has not responded to requests for action. The Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry has scheduled a hearing for February 27.

**Maine** – [LD 528](#) would establish a system of Certified Rabies Vaccinators appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry after training to administer rabies vaccines to animals.

**Massachusetts** – [S.D.1017](#) and [H.D.2408](#) An Act Relative To Updating Animal Health Inspections would require persons selling, exchanging or otherwise transferring the offspring of their personally owned animals to be licensed, inspected and regulated as a pet shop.

**Massachusetts** – [H.D.2126](#) would mandate annual reporting by certain nonprofit animal placement entities on the importation of dogs and cats into Massachusetts. The report must detail the number of dogs and cats brought into Massachusetts during the previous year, including the state or country of origin for each animal, along with identification of the origination source and transporter. This reporting requirement is intended to provide better oversight and tracking of animal movements into the state, thereby supporting animal health and welfare.

**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** – [H.D.569](#) would create a sales tax exemption for animal medication prescribed by veterinarians.

**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.

**Massachusetts** – [H.D.810](#) An Act Enhancing The Issuance Of Citations For Cruel Conditions For Animals would require the commissioner of the Department of Agricultural Resources, in consultation with the Animal Control Officers

Association of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Animal Rescue League of Boston, promulgate regulations to implement, enforce, and administer regulations for dogs and animals under [MGL c. 140 § 174E \(f\) and \(g\)](#).

**Massachusetts** – [S.D.552](#) would ban the retail sale of dogs, cats, rabbits, and guinea pigs in pet shops eliminating consumer protections while encouraging the showcasing of animals from shelters and rescues at these locations.

**New Hampshire** – [SB 290](#) would amend the description of the crime of animal cruelty at RSA to [644:8](#) to insert a broad definition and application for the word “torture” where it appears, without exception for current lawful animal activities. The Senate Judiciary Committee held a public hearing for February 18. AKC testified and issued [this alert](#) in opposition.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 240](#) would remove the penalty for non-payment of dog licenses. AKC testified on January 21 in opposition because compliance with rabies vaccination requirements is enforced by dog licensure. A subcommittee has proposed clarification that a town “may” issue an animal forfeiture warrant to someone not in compliance rather than “shall” to allow additional time for compliance. After adoption of [the amendment](#), the bill was sent to the House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee on February 13.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 86](#) would increase the cost of service for notice of civil forfeiture of unlicensed dogs to the rate for certified mail. The committee voted January 28 for it to pass with an [amendment](#) ensuring the increased rate would mirror the actual cost.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 250](#) would enable local governing bodies to regulate the muzzling of dogs.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 153](#) would require that two or more law enforcement officers in each county receive training regarding animal cruelty. The House Environment and Agriculture Committee heard testimony January 21 that law

enforcement needs additional training on animal cruelty laws and investigations. A subcommittee is meeting February 14 to re-draft the bill.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 262](#) 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** – [HB 267](#) would exempt individuals with degrees in veterinary medicine or chiropractics who have completed a nationally recognized animal chiropractic program from veterinary licensure requirements. The committee voted January 22 that it ought to pass.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 272](#) would exempt certain agricultural practices from municipal quiet hours.

**New Hampshire** – [SB 32](#) would allow the Fish and Game Commission's public hearing notices to be posted digitally on newspaper websites and make other changes for anglers. The committee held a hearing and voted January 30 that the bill ought to pass with [amendment](#).

**New Hampshire** – [S.B.50](#) would establish a committee to study the regulation of private animal boarding facilities. After the January 23 hearing, the committee voted it ought to pass on January 30.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 593](#) would expand the scope of loss of consortium claims to include pets, allowing individuals to seek damages for the loss of love, companionship, comfort, care, assistance, protection, affection, society, and moral support of a pet. The House Judiciary Committee scheduled a public hearing for February 12. AKC testified and issued this [alert in opposition](#).

**Rhode Island** – [HB 5128](#) would amend the law pertaining to cruelty to animals, by introducing stricter penalties for offenses that result in the death of an animal.

**Rhode Island** – [SB 34](#) would among many provisions, remove the sales tax on pet care services.

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

**Vermont** – [H. 183](#) would introduce a strict liability standard for injuries caused by domestic dogs, aiming to hold dog owners accountable for any harm their pets may inflict. The provisions establish that dog owners have a duty to keep their dogs under reasonable control and prevent them from running at large. Owners may be held liable for injuries caused by their dogs, regardless of the dog's past behavior or the owner's knowledge of any dangerous tendencies.

**Vermont** – [H. 166](#) would introduce comprehensive regulations for hunting with dogs, specifically targeting the training and use of dogs in hunting. It establishes clear definitions for terms such as "accompany," "at large," and "control of dog," emphasizing the need for handlers to maintain close supervision and control over their dogs without relying on electronic devices.