

# New England State Issues May 2025

**Connecticut** – [HB 6226](#) allows an impounded dog, including those deemed dangerous and seized by animal control, to be housed in a volunteer's foster home after 90 days while pending final court disposition. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted opposition to the March 24 Joint Environment Committee hearing. It did not advance from committee before the deadline.

**Connecticut** – [H.B.6277](#) mandates that “animal breeders” (any person who breeds dogs, cats, rabbits or guinea pigs for sale or transfer to an animal testing facility) and animal testing facilities offer dogs, cats, rabbits, or guinea pigs that are “no longer needed” and do not pose a health or safety risk to the public for adoption via animal adoption or rescue organizations. It also provides that animal breeders and testing facilities will not be held liable for any harm or defects associated with animals adopted under this provision. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted opposition to the March 24 Joint Environment Committee hearing. The committee advanced a [substitute draft](#) mandating instead that state higher education institutions offer these animals for adoption once research is completed so long as no health or safety risk is posed. It is on the House calendar.

**Connecticut** – [HB 6240](#) was raised for consideration by the Joint Environment Committee on March 17. It would amend existing statutes concerning the sale of animals in pet stores by prohibiting the sourcing of animals from any USDA breeder with a direct *or indirect* violation of the Animal Welfare Act in the past seven (7) years. In addition, pet shops would annually report to the Department of Agriculture the origin of animals sourced, the number of violations and their nature. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted concerns to the March 24 Joint Environment Committee hearing. The committee [revised the bill](#) to look back three years for violations and voted it ought to pass as amended. It is on the House calendar.

**Connecticut** – [HB 6218](#) (An Act Concerning Qualifications for Employment as an Animal Control Officer) disqualifies anyone with a history of animal cruelty from being qualified as an animal control officer. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted support to the March 24 Joint Environment Committee hearing. The bill did not advance before the committee deadline.

**Connecticut** – [SB 1386](#) prohibits homeowners' insurance and renters' insurance policies from discriminating based on harboring or owning any dog of a specific breed or mixture of breeds. In addition, the state would evaluate the feasibility of establishing

penalties for the intentional misrepresentation of a dog as a service animal. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted testimony in support for the Joint Insurance and Real Estate Committee's public hearing on March 4. On March 11, despite opposition from the insurance industry, the Committee approved a [new draft of SB 1386](#) that would also prohibit insurance discrimination against owners of a therapy animal based upon breed. It is on the Senate calendar.

**Connecticut** – [HB 6964](#) creates 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. The committee met on March 18 and voted it favorably to the House floor and it is on the calendar for consideration.

**Connecticut** – [HB 6832](#) authorizes 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. On March 12, the committee voted to advance HB 6832, despite AKC's concerns and significant testimony in opposition. The bill is on the House calendar for consideration.

**Maine** – [LD 1771](#) would require a hobby kennel owner to apply for and maintain a \$50 state animal care facility license; annually submit proof of a kennel inspection completed by your town's animal control officer (ACO) or a state humane agent if the town has no ACO, between the December 31 license expiration date and January 31; pay for and acquire individual municipal dog licenses for every dog owned (\$11 for each intact dog) due to the elimination of the option of receiving up to 10 kennel license tags for dogs owned under one \$42 municipal kennel license; and pay violation fines of not less than \$50 nor more than \$200 per day. The Joint Agricultural, Conservation and Forestry Committee held a public hearing on May 6. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition. The committee had a work session on May 13 and there was a divided vote to pass the bill with amendments.

**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. AKC issued [this information](#) noting a March 13 public hearing was held by the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The committee adopted an amendment presented by the bill sponsor to also authorize licensed vet techs to administer rabies vaccine under the "indirect" supervision of a licensed veterinarian. It was voted ought to pass as amended on March 27 and has

been carried over to the next special or regular session of the 132nd Legislature for further consideration.

**Massachusetts** – [SB 1458](#) and [HB 2253](#) (An Act Relative To Updating Animal Health Inspections) require persons selling, exchanging or otherwise transferring the offspring of their personally owned animals to be licensed, inspected and regulated as a pet shop. These have been referred to the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.

**Massachusetts** – [HB 2319](#) mandates 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. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.

**Massachusetts** – [SB 1207](#) imposes 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. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

**Massachusetts** – [HB 3850](#) establishes The Massachusetts Veterans Service Dog Program. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs.

**Massachusetts** – [SB 1206](#) standardizes 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. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

**Massachusetts** – [HB 1914](#) imposes a temporary possession ban of animals for animal abusers. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

**Massachusetts** – [HB 337](#) requires 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 re-registration within 5 years by paying the lapsed license fee and submitting an affidavit.

**Massachusetts** – [HB 3024](#) creates a sales tax exemption for animal medication prescribed by veterinarians. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure.

**Massachusetts** – [SB 1263](#) focuses on the protection and valuation of pets, specifically cats and dogs, including the 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. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

**Massachusetts** – [HB 1938](#) (An Act Enhancing The Issuance Of Citations For Cruel Conditions For Animals) requires 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 \(g\)](#). It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

**Massachusetts** – [SB 618](#) bans 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. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 616](#) would, among many provisions, (1) ensure a person charged with animal cruelty is aware of their right to hire a licensed veterinarian of their choice to examine the animals; (2) require proof that proper care and facilities can be provided for adults and offspring by the confiscating party; and (3) prohibit anyone initiating an animal welfare complaint from participating in or being present during any investigation into that complaint. AKC issued this [alert](#) in support and testified at the House Environment and Agriculture Committee hearing. The committee held multiple meetings and re-drafted the bill based upon testimony received. [Amended HB 616](#) was voted ought to pass on March 18 and then passed by the House. On April 22, the amended bill was heard by the Senate Judiciary Committee. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in support. The committee is working on additional changes.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 250](#) enables local governing bodies to regulate the muzzling of dogs. AKC expressed concern at the House Environment and Agriculture Committee's March 5 hearing that breeds considered dangerous could be discriminated against by broad ordinance adoption and encouraged the committee to amend the bill by offering municipalities with ordinance tools for identifying dangerous dogs and methods to restrain and remediate them while ensuring public safety. The committee adopted [an amendment](#) that narrows the municipal authority to adopt muzzle ordinances for vicious dogs and voted the bill ought to pass as amended on March 18 and then it passed the House. It had an April 8 hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and passed the Senate on May 1 with [an amendment](#) making a minor increase in fines.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 153](#) requires 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 met February 14 and presented [an amendment](#) to the full committee that would establish a committee to study adding a statewide resource to assist with the investigation, training, prosecution, and prompt response of animal cruelty. It was adopted and the amended bill voted ought to pass. On March 6, the House waived a Finance Committee referral and the Senate referred it to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. AKC submitted testimony in support at a hearing on March 18, and the committee voted unanimously it ought to pass. The Senate voted it to third reading on March 27 and then enrolled on April 30.

**Rhode Island** – [SB 550](#) would update the penalties for violations relating to animals and animal husbandry; establish an animal care taskforce comprised of animal control officers and animal shelters to meet quarterly for reviewing the laws and making recommendations on legislation; and add a provision criminalizing a “dog breeder” who intentionally overfeeds a dog for aesthetic reasons or to influence the physical appearance of dog to the detriment of the dog’s health and mobility. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on April 10. It is under review by the committee.

**Rhode Island** – [SB 551](#) would authorize the forfeiture of an animal, including dogs, upon an arrest, civil citation, or personally observed neglect or abandonment by an animal control officer (ACO), who could take immediate possession of the animal; provide the owner with a seizure notice within 48 hours; and quickly schedule a hearing for the permanent “rehoming” of the animal based on a preponderance of evidence instead of a full investigation. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on April 10. It is under review by the committee.

**Rhode Island** – [HB 5128](#) amends the law pertaining to cruelty to animals, by introducing stricter penalties for offenses that result in the death of an animal. The House Judiciary Committee held a public hearing on March 4 and the bill was forwarded to a study committee for review.

**Rhode Island** – [SB 34](#) would, among many other provisions, remove the sales tax on pet care services. It was sent to Senate Finance. A hearing was held April 18 and the bill was held for further study on May 1.

**Rhode Island** – [HB 5926](#) would allow for compensation for the loss of companionship, love, and affection provided by a pet that has been seriously injured or killed due to another person's unlawful and intentional or negligent actions by allowing (1) pet owners to seek noneconomic damages, (2) when the injury or death occurred on the pet owner or caretaker's property or while the pet was under their control and supervision, and (3) establishing minimum recovery amounts of \$500 for serious injury and \$750 for death or injury resulting in death with a maximum of \$7,500 for noneconomic damages. Although pets are held in exceedingly high esteem, allowing non-economic damages in such cases will likely result in many harmful unintentional consequences for pet owners and their pets. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition on March 4. The bill is under review by a study committee.

**Rhode Island** – [SB 325](#) changes the current hobby breeder definition from “persons selling fewer than twenty (20) dogs or three (3) litters, whichever is greater, in a single calendar year,” to the sale or offering for sale of greater than two (2) litters of dogs or cats, or combination of sale of dogs and cats, in any three hundred and sixty-five (365) day period. AKC has reached out to the sponsor with concerns and issued [this alert](#) regarding the Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture public hearing scheduled for March 19. It has been sent for further study.

**Rhode Island** – [HB 6089](#) (An Act Relating To Animals And Animal Husbandry — Cruelty To Animals) increases imprisonment penalties and adds mandatory community service for violations of § 4-1-9. A hearing was held March 25 and the bill is under further review.