

New England State Capitol Updates July 2025

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; 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. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition. At the committee work session of, several amendments were discussed and approved before the committee voted it ought to pass as amended, in a divided report. Once the adopted amendments noted [here](#) were made public, the Senate suspended its rules and immediately passed it June 2. The House made minor clarifying amendments that the Senate agreed to. Details are in [this alert](#). It became [Public Law Chapter 414](#) without the Governor's signature and is effective September 24.

Massachusetts – In May, [SD 2945](#) was filed late to address an issue resulting from passage of Ollie's Law last session. SD 2945 would allow the keeper of any dog held in a licensed kennel to remove its dog tag in the interest of safety so long as the dog has another means of identification. The Senate has referred it to the committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.

Massachusetts – [HB 1476](#) regarding pet friendly housing would among other provisions, prohibit housing facilities from banning dogs based on breed, size, weight, or appearance; and prevent eviction solely due to pet ownership. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted supportive testimony for the June 4 hearing.

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 under the state's authority to oversee pet shops. The Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government held a public hearing on June 10. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition.

Massachusetts – [HB 2245](#) would create a new section requiring municipal licensure and state regulations for the transfer of dogs by commercial breeding kennels, as defined in [MGL c. 140 § 136A](#). It was referred to the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government and a public hearing was held on June 10.

Massachusetts – [HB 2342](#) and [SB 1459](#) would require a hearing authority seeking to impound a dog deemed dangerous to obtain a court order of impoundment for any length of time held beyond the mandated quarantine period. In addition to confinement specifics, these bills would require the owner consult with a veterinarian, behaviorist, or trainer to develop a public safety and behavior modification plan that solely employs evidence-based positive training techniques that do not result in pain, discomfort, fear or anxiety and do not use prong or choke collars. They were referred to the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government and a public hearing was held on June 10.

Massachusetts – [SB 1460](#) would significantly amend current law restricting how and when you are permitted to tether or confine a dog. AKC agrees that no dog ought to be tethered with a pinch or choke collar. However, AKC is opposed to Sections 1, 4 and 6 because (1) a pen or secure enclosure would be required to provide at least 100 square feet per dog; and (2) the proposed definition of “outside and unattended” would prohibit outdoor kennel use for longer than 5 hours or from 10pm to 6am. It was referred to the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government and a public hearing was held on June 10. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition to those provisions.

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 originating 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 was referred to the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government but not included in the June 10 public hearing for animal bills. On July 7, it was discharged to the Joint Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries.

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. Details on the July 29 public hearing are in [this alert](#).

Massachusetts – [HB 3850](#) establishes The Massachusetts Veterans Service Dog Program. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs. AKC submitted testimony in support. Details on the July 22 public hearing are in [this alert](#).

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. This concern was shared with the Joint Committee on Judiciary for their April 22 public hearing. On June 16, the committee voted the bill favorably without changes.

Massachusetts – [HB 1914](#) imposes a temporary possession ban of animals for animal abusers. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary. Details on the July 29 public hearing are in [this alert](#).

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. Details on the July 29 public hearing are in [this alert](#).

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, to 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. Details on the July 29 public hearing are in [this alert](#).

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.

Massachusetts – SB 1277 would newly authorize authorities to seize animals suspected of neglect and follow court procedures. No animals should be negligently treated. But, as filed, the text does not adequately respect the rights of animal owners. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary. Details on the July 29 public hearing are in [this alert](#).

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 re-drafted the bill based upon testimony received. [Amended HB 616](#) was passed by the House. The amended bill was heard by the Senate Judiciary Committee, and the AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in support. However, the committee voted the bill ought not to pass and the Senate laid the bill on the table. On June 5, the House amended SB 302 with text from amended HB 616 and sent it to the Senate. AKC issued [this alert](#). A conference committee met on June 17 but was unable to come to an agreement.

New Hampshire – [HB 250](#) enables local governing bodies to regulate the muzzling of dogs. AKC expressed concern at the House Environment and Agriculture Committee 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 license fees. A conference committee negotiated this [final text](#) that exempts certain working dogs from these ordinances and it was adopted by both chambers on June 26.

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. AKC also met with the bill sponsor. On June 2, the committee voted favorably to adopt [SB 550 substitute A](#) addressing AKC's concerns before the Senate passed it. The House introduced [HB 6407](#) as a companion bill to SB 550 substitute A on June 11 and it was sent to the House Judiciary Committee. Neither bill advanced before adjournment.

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. AKC met with the bill sponsor and instead of advancing SB 551, [SB 550 substitute A](#) was voted favorably that would allow animal control officers to use the same legal procedures as the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals does for the forfeiture of animals under certain circumstances. The bill passed the Senate. The House introduced [HB 6407](#) as a companion bill to SB 550 substitute A on June 11 and it was sent to the House Judiciary Committee. Neither bill advanced before adjournment.

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 and the bill was forwarded to a study committee for review. It did not advance before adjournment.

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. It did not advance before adjournment.

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. The committee advanced the bill without changes, but before passage in the Senate, [AKC concerns were addressed with a floor amendment](#). The House then introduced [HB 6383](#) on June 3 and AKC submitted the same concerns for the June 10 House Committee on Corporations Committee hearing. As noted in [this update](#), the committee adopted the Senate amendment text on June 16 and voted it favorably to the House calendar. Both amended bills passed each chamber and the Governor signed them into law on June 30.

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 regarding animal fighting. On June 16, the committee approved an [amended HB 6089](#) before placing the bill on the House calendar. The amended bill would increase the imprisonment penalty for animal fighting from two (2) to five (5) years for a subsequent conviction under § 4-1-9 and would also require mandatory community service. It passed each chamber and the Governor signed it into law on June 27.

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We Do for Dogs.**

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