

New England State Capitol Update August 2025

Massachusetts – In May, [SD 2945](#) was filed 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.

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. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition at a Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government public hearing. On August 5, the committee favorably released a re-drafted bill, [HB 4365](#), and sent it to House Ways and Means. HB 4365 would create a new "personal breeder kennel" municipal license for anyone with three or more intact females whelping a litter in the preceding 12 months who sell or exchange the offspring. The state would issue regulations within 18 months for commercial breeder and personal breeder kennels to be enforced by the state and municipal animal control officers. AKC is analyzing details in HB 4365.

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 has had a public hearing in the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.

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. A public hearing was held by the Joint

Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government. HB 2342 was reported favorably by the committee on August 15.

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. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition to those provisions at a the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government public hearing.

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 on July 7, it was discharged to the Joint Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries.

Massachusetts – [SB 1207](#) and [HB 1914](#) 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. The Joint Committee on Judiciary held a public hearing on July 29. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted testimony in support.

Massachusetts – [HB 3850](#) establishes the Massachusetts Veterans Service Dog Program. The Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs held a public hearing on July 22. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted testimony in support.

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. On June 16, the committee voted the bill favorably without changes and forwarded it to the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

Massachusetts – [SB 1277](#) and [HB 1934](#) would establish new protections for neglected animals by defining neglect and empowering authorities to act in emergencies. They would allow for animal removal, care petitions, and seizures. A court hearing would be held within 10 days to assess the animal's condition and the owner's capacity to care for it. If neglect is confirmed, the court may order forfeiture, euthanasia, or recovery of care costs from the owner. Appeals are limited to new evidence, and other animals may also be forfeited if the owner cannot provide humane care. The Joint Committee on Judiciary held a hearing on July 29. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in support of the bills' intent but, requested multiple amendments to ensure fair and constitutional requirements are satisfied.

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. After the Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure held a hearing, the bill was released favorably to House Ways and Means Committee on July 17.

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

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. The Joint Committee on Judiciary held a hearing on July 29. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted testimony in opposition.

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 \(g\)](#). The Joint Committee on Judiciary held a hearing on July 29. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted a request for amendment.

Massachusetts – [SB 618](#) is one of several bills that 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. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

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We Do for Dogs.**

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