



# Taking Command

A publication of the AKC Government Relations Department



## What's New from AKC Government Relations

### **Elections are Coming: Ideas for Identifying Dog-Friendly Candidates**

Primary elections across the U.S. are narrowing the list of candidates who will be on the ballot on Election Day, November 3. To preserve the future of purebred dogs, it's important to identify dog-friendly candidates and use your vote to elect those who will protect the rights of responsible dog owners, exhibitors and breeders. Here are four steps that every dog owner should take during the 2020 election cycle.

1. Make sure your voter registration is up-to-date, and consider hosting a voter registration drive at an upcoming dog show or event.
2. Find out where, when, and how to vote -- including absentee and early voting options. Check on current requirements for proof of identity.
3. Become an educated voter – identify and support those candidates who respect your rights as a responsible dog owner.
4. Mark your calendar for the upcoming elections, then get out and vote!

Here are some ways to determine if a candidate will work to protect your rights as a dog owner.

[Read More](#)



## AKC GR Out and About

Legislatures are in full swing across the country and AKC Government Relations (GR), clubs, breeders, and federations are walking the halls in capitols across the country to advocate on behalf of our dogs, breeding programs, and sport. In addition to the outreach and advocacy work conducted by AKC's four regional GR staff, GR team members joined a number of local clubs and federations for special advocacy days at state houses around the country.

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## Meet the AKC Government Relations Team

The AKC is pleased to introduce the newest member of the AKC Legislative team, Charley Hall. Charley was appointed Legislative Analyst/Community Outreach Coordinator of the Mid-Atlantic/PA region in early January. Charley will be based out of Pennsylvania and will be a canine policy resources for dog owners, clubs, policy officials and the public in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

AKC GR is also pleased to introduce Mikki McGinnis, AKC GR Project and Administrative Manager who assists in all aspects of department administration and serves as program manager for the service dog program .

Learn more about Charley, Mikki, and the rest of your contacts at AKC GR below. [Click here](#) for a map of GR staff and contacts by region.

[Read More](#)

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## AKC Adopts New Canine Legislation Position Statement on Rehoming of Research Dogs

In January, the AKC Board of Directors approved a new



AKC canine legislation position statement on the [Rehoming of Dogs Previously Used in Research](#). The policy statement addresses concerns about a new class of proposals at the state and federal levels that mandate that facilities that conduct animal research offer animal research subjects to external “rescue” organizations for adoption – without regard to the health of the animal, the appropriateness of placement, or the ownership rights of the research facility.

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## **AKC Updates Canine Legislation Position Statement to Address Concerns of Dogs in Vehicles**

In January, the AKC Board of Directors approved revisions to the AKC canine legislation position statement on [Proper Care and Humane Treatment of Dogs](#) to address issues related to legislation that allows private individuals to break into vehicles if they perceive a dog to be in distress. The revision also extends references to proper care and humane treatment to include transportation.

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## **In Session**

The American Kennel Club is pleased to share with you the latest issue of the AKC’s [In Session](#) newsletter.



# IN SESSION

AKC'S CONGRESSIONAL NEWSLETTER  
The American Kennel Club's Newsletter for Members of Congress and their Staff

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### PERSPECTIVES

*We never start changing dogs... We're the dog's champion.*

#### Healthy Pets, Healthy Families

Welcoming a new pet into your family is one of the most important commitments you can make. As a prospective pet owner, you want to make sure that your dog will be healthy and that you have a skill and clear record of its medical history. For Americans who get their dogs from responsible breeders that they know and trust, this information is readily available. Similar information is also available for pets from shelters that source from USDA-registered professional dog breeders.

Safely, local and state laws that prohibit the sale of purpose bred pets from regulated pet retailers, along with and gaps in current import laws are contributing to an increase in sick dogs imported from overseas puppy mills and other random sources. In many cases, a large number of these dogs supply the U.S. retail "rescue" pet industry, which in 2018 accounted for 54% of dogs acquired in the U.S.

### CONGRESSIONAL CANINE SPOTLIGHT

## Congressman Denver Riggleman



Photo courtesy Congressman Denver Riggleman

Congressman Denver Riggleman never intended to get into politics. But now that he has – and although he claims the great support of his wife Christine and three children – he says his biggest cheerleaders go by the names Chewbacca, Miki, and Len.

Growing up in Manassas, Virginia, Rep. Denver Riggleman's love for dogs began with his shepherd/fal mix named Lancelot. The two were so close that the Congressman notes "it was like we were attached at the hip." The Congressman notes, Lancelot was a member of the family. From playing with him and his friends to accompanying him to football practice, the pup was always by his side.

Lancelot inspired the Congressman's lifelong passion for dogs. His family now has three, a brown Newfoundland (Chewbacca aka Chewy) and two Samoyeds (Miki and Len), after his third Samoyed passed away. The three dogs are AKC registered and come from small breeders in the Northern Virginia area. The Congressman says that registering his dogs with AKC has been "incredibly rewarding and helpful" when it comes to raising his dogs.

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[www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

This issue highlights public health concerns related to the estimated one-million dogs that are imported into the US annually. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, many if these dogs, destined for the large U.S. retail rescue market have invalid or falsified records, and receive little or no health checks or verification upon entry.

Also, meet Virginia Congressman Denver Riggleman and his pack of two Samoyeds and a Newfoundland.

[Read More](#)

## Legislative Information and Updates

Congress, forty-one states, and the District of Columbia are currently in session. Eighteen states are accepting pre-filed bills for the 2020 legislative session. AKC Government Relations is currently tracking more than 2,280 bills on the federal, state, and local levels. Many of these bills are being carried over from the previous (2019) session. The majority of sessions are commencing within the next week. Below are some highlights of pending canine legislation issues across the country. For more information on these bills, and information on how you can get involved, visit the AKC GR Legislative Action Center at [www.akcgr.org](http://www.akcgr.org).

Visit the [2020 Legislation Tracking page](#) for the most up-to-date information on state and federal legislation. This site, updated each weekday, provides the latest bill text, status, and links to legislative alerts posted by the AKC. Click on the links below to view highlights of issues that are being tracked by AKC Government Relations:

**Federal**

Issues that may affect all dog owners in the U.S.

**State**

Issues specific to your state

**Local**

Issues at the city, county, and metropolitan levels,

and in U.S. territories

Please contact AKC GR at (919) 816-3720 or [doglaw@akc.org](mailto:doglaw@akc.org) for more information or to let us know what's happening in your local community.



AMERICAN  
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