



AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB



IN SESSION

AKC'S CONGRESSIONAL NEWSLETTER

The American Kennel Club's Newsletter for Members of Congress and their Staff

PERSPECTIVES

*We're more than champion dogs...
We're the dog's champion.*

Why The Healthy Dog Importation Act Matters

The demand for pet dogs in the United States—without accounting for population growth—is more than 8 million dogs annually.

U.S. breeders are unable to meet this demand and as a result, approximately one million dogs are imported into the U.S. annually, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

AKC recognizes the value of importing working dogs and breeding stock from overseas, freedom of choice in selecting a pet, and ensuring that pet owners can travel with a minimum of disruption. However, we are also concerned about increasing documented incidences of the importation of unhealthy pets, often intended for transfer, where public and pet health may be inadequately protected.

The exponential growth in the import of dogs – particularly from random and unregulated sources – has resulted in dogs with non-native parasites and zoonotic

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CONGRESSIONAL CANINE SPOTLIGHT

Minority Leader

Kevin McCarthy



Photos courtesy Congressman Kevin McCarthy

Members of Congress usually use their social media to show off events they've been to or people they've met. Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (CA-23) likes to use his for much cuter reasons: Meet Johnny "Cash" and "Teddy" Roosevelt, two rambunctious Australian Shepherds (Aussies) and leaders of the "cutest puppy caucus."

This year, the Congressman's family surprised him with the puppies for his birthday, after the tragic loss of his other Australian Shepherd, Mac, to cancer.

Australian Shepherds are a very intelligent breed, and they love anything that involves physical activity that gets their brain thinking. Training is key for this herding breed, and the Minority Leader is still in the process of training Teddy and Cash right now, but says they are doing great! They are already able to "give", "sit", "lie down", and give "high fives."

Although the dogs reside at his home in Bakersfield, CA, the Congressman and staff do get the occasional furry visitor when a staffer brings in their pet at the end of a busy week, or they have a meeting that involves animals. In 2019, Zach Skow from Marley's Mutts brought two of his dogs to the Capitol, including the famous Cora Rose. Skow is part of an initiative in the Congressman's district known as the Pawsitive Change Program, where he pairs inmates with dogs likely to be euthanized in order to give them both a new lease on life. This program teaches dogs new skills that will help them to find their forever

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diseases being imported and passed into the general public, creating a significant public health threat.

Current pet import oversight mechanisms administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Customs and Border Protection were established prior to this significant growth in imports and are unable to adequately check canine health upon entry into the United States or protect against the public and animal health threat this represents.

AKC is grateful for the bi-partisan leadership of Congress-men Abraham (LA-5), Schrader (OR-5) and Yoho (FL-3) in sponsoring the Healthy Dog Importation Act (HR 6921) to ensure that all dogs imported into the United States are fully immunized; free of serious infection, parasites and contagious diseases; permanently identified; and have a valid and verifiable health certificate from an accredited veterinarian. We believe these simple measures can go a long way to addressing this important public health issue.

“In the last several years, zoonotic diseases such as rabies, canine influenza and distemper have been carried into the U.S. by dogs imported without basic veterinary checks or valid health certificates. With an estimated one million dogs entering the U.S. annually, this represents a ticking time bomb for animal and public health,” said Dennis Sprung, AKC President and CEO. “The basic health certifications that this bill requires for every dog imported will help protect the health and wellbeing of all dogs and animals in our nation – and the humans who care for them.”

AKC joins a broad range of animal welfare and public health groups including the American Veterinary Medical Association, Animal Health Institute, National Animal Interest Alliance, National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture officials and others in support of the Healthy Dog Import Act.

We look forward to working with the sponsors to advance this important safeguard for pet and public health, and we urge you to join us in supporting this effort.

See page 3 to learn more or visit www.akcgr.org/pet-import.

As always, please, don't hesitate to contact me if I can answer questions or be of assistance.

All the best,



Sheila Goffe

Vice President, Government Relations

shg@akc.org



home, and likewise, it helps inmates practice patience and care when training these dogs.

The Congressman is a strong advocate for animal welfare, which for dog owners, he says, should begin at home. He believes it's imperative that dog owners understand the specific needs of their breed, and make sure they get the love and attention they need and deserve. “As pet own-ers,” he states, “we need to make sure that we don't allow animal abuse to happen in our homes or communities. No animal deserves that.” Furthermore, the Congressman notes it is important to make sure that your pets are well-groomed, well-nourished, and mentally and physical-ly stimulated. This includes in the summertime, when active breeds, such as Aussies, love to be outside, and need to have access to water and an area to cool down.

Congressman McCarthy and his family ensure they are being responsible dog owners and caring for the needs of Cash and Teddy. At the end of the day, however, one of the most important things these puppies want is be involved and around the rest of the family. According to the Congressman, “Our dogs are definitely core members of the family, and they're typically at the center of the attention. They know it too!”

McCarthy can't help but admire the affection that dogs bring to their owners' lives. “Dogs unconditionally love their humans and that's just one of the many reasons they are so pure” he says. ■

More about the Australian Shepherd:

The Australian Shepherd, a lean, tough ranch dog, is one of those “only in America” stories: a European breed perfected in California by way of Australia. Fixtures on the rodeo circuit, they are closely associated with the cowboy life. The Australian Shepherd, the cowboy's herding dog of choice, is a medium-sized worker with a keen, penetrating gaze in the eye. Aussie coats offer different looks, including merle (a mottled pattern with contrasting shades of blue or red), tri colored, black and white, and more. In all ways, they're the picture of rugged and agile movers of stock. This isn't the pet for everyone. But if you're looking for a brainy, tireless, and trainable partner for work or sport, your search might end here.

Did You Know?

- The Aussie's popularity boomed with Western culture and horse-riding after WWII and was often featured in rodeos, horse shows, movies, and TV.
- The Australian Shepherd is the AKC's 17th most popular breed.
- Australian Shepherds have docked tails for a very important reason. As a working breed on farms and ranches, their tails are docked to avoid injury.



ISSUE ANALYSIS

Healthy Dog Importation Act: Protecting Pets and Public Safety

In late May, the three Doctors of Veterinary Medicine serving in Congress—Representatives Ralph Abraham, Kurt Schrader and Ted Yoho—introduced the Healthy Dog Importation Act (H.R. 6921). This bipartisan measure is designed to protect U.S. human and animal health by ensuring that all dogs entering the United States are healthy and accompanied by a health certificate from an accredited veterinary authority in the country of origin, that each dog is identified by microchip, and that a centralized, publicly available data-base of health certificates of imported dogs is established that can be utilized by Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Customs and Border Protection for verification of health records upon arrival in the United States.

Requiring verified health records for imports isn't new to Americans who have shipped dogs to Europe and elsewhere, where similar requirements have been in place for years. In fact, most people are surprised by how few health requirements are necessary to import a dog into the United States. Currently, the only requirements for dogs entering the U.S. are that they appear in good health, be at least 6 months old if they are being imported for resale (including those dogs intended for adoption), and that they be accompanied by a rabies vaccination certificate if they do not come from a rabies-free or low-risk country as determined by CDC.¹²



Historically, concerns about imported dogs bringing contagious and zoonotic disease and non-native parasites into the U.S. were limited by relatively low numbers of imports. However, over the last decade, the number of dogs imported into the U.S. has increased exponentially, even as oversight of dog imports has waned. In January of 2019, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that an estimated one million or more dogs are imported annually into the United States. This is nearly a 400 percent increase in the number of dogs CDC reported that were imported into the U.S. in 2006.³

The number of sick and diseased dogs entering the country increasingly alarms public health officials.

The CDC and other public health organiza-

tions have noted a recent uptick in instances of dogs entering the U.S. infected with zoonotic diseases such as rabies, canine distemper and influenza.

- In May 2019, the CDC banned the import of dogs from Egypt due to multiple instances of rabid dogs being brought into the U.S. and distributed throughout rescue networks.⁴
- In March 2019, Scientists at Cornell University's Animal Health Diagnostic Center identified a strain of Asian canine distemper virus never reported in North America, determining that the source was likely a dog "rescued" from a Korean live-stock market.⁵
- In November of 2019, the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* raised concerns about importation of dogs with African Swine Fever from certain regions of the world, stating, "Veterinarians with state governments are concerned that dogs and their carriers could bring with them pathogens, especially the African swine fever virus responsible for killing whole pig herds in China and Eastern Europe."⁶
- In June of 2020, an article in *Drovers* outlined the threat that dogs entering the U.S. carrying exotic parasites such as the Bunt tick, which is the main vector of "heartwater" or rickettsial disease, pose to livestock and other ruminants.⁷

The American Kennel Club recognizes the value of importing breeding stock from overseas, freedom of choice in selecting a pet, and the need to fulfill public demand for personal pets and working dogs such as explosive detection canines. We also support measures to ensure that people may travel with their pets with a minimum of disruption. However, we believe there is an urgent need to implement simple health protection measures like those outlined in the Healthy Dog Importation Act to protect our pets, live-stock and public health.

AKC is working with a broad range of animal welfare and public health groups including the American Veterinary Medical Association, Animal Health Institute, National Animal Interest Alliance, National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture officials and others in support of the Healthy Dog Importation Act.

As our country focuses on ending the COVID-19 pandemic and preventing the introduction and spread of other zoonotic diseases such as coronaviruses, we must work together to ensure that all animals, including dogs, entering the U.S. are healthy and not a risk for spreading diseases or parasites that could adversely impact public health. ■



¹ USDA, Report on Importation of Live Dogs into the United States, June 25, 2019

² CDC, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/01/31/2019-00506/guidance-regarding-agency-interpretation-of-rabies-free-as-it-relates-to-theimportation-of-dog>

³ Ibid

⁴ CDC, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/05/10/2019-09654/notice-of-temporary-suspension-of-dogs-entering-the-united-states-from-egypt>

⁵ Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/news/20190318/new-strain-canine-distemper-virus-arrives-north-america>

⁶ Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, *State Authorities See Disease Risk in Imported Dogs*, November 14, 2019, <https://www.avma.org/javma-news/2019-12-01/state-authorities-see-disease-risk-imported-dogs>

⁷ *Drovers*, *Why Cattlemen Should Care About Dog Import Legislation*, June 15, 2020, <https://www.drovers.com/article/why-cattlemen-should-care-about-dog-import-legislation>

The Most Popular Dog Breeds of 2019



Wondering how popular your pooch really is? Now you can find out. The [most popular dog breeds of 2019](#) were released on May 1, 2020 (also [National Purebred Dog Day](#)) based on 2019 AKC registration statistics.

It may come as no surprise that the Labrador Retriever takes the top spot for the 29th year in a row, but other big movers and shakers include the [Pembroke Welsh Corgi](#), which broke into the top 10 this year for the first time ever. Other notable changes include the [Icelandic Sheepdog](#), which jumped up 24 spots since last year.

So why do registration statistics matter? Registration is not only [beneficial for your dog](#), but for dogs everywhere. The American Kennel Club and its affiliates have donated over \$38 million to canine health research and \$7 million to pet disaster relief.

Additionally, the AKC is the only purebred dog registry in the United States that maintains a systematic and sustained investigation and inspection effort. The AKC conducts thousands of inspections each year to ensure compliance with standards that support the health, safety, and welfare of dogs and the environments in which they live. ■

2020 Most Popular Dog Breeds (Based on 2019 Stats)

BREED	2019
Retrievers (Labrador)	1
German Shepherd Dogs	2
Retrievers (Golden)	3
French Bulldogs	4
Bulldogs	5
Poodles	6
Beagles	7
Rottweilers	8
Pointers (German Shorthaired)	9
Pembroke Welsh Corgis	10

Want to take a deeper dive into the rankings? Check out the [biggest movers and shakers on the list](#).

AKC Dog Shows Benefit Your Local Economy



There is no question that dogs have a positive impact on our lives. Participating or attending a dog show is a great way to learn about the right breed of dog for your family and the joys and responsibilities of dog ownership.

But have you ever considered that there are even more far-reaching benefits of supporting responsible dog owners and local dog events? Dog shows and responsible dog ownership have a ripple effect

that benefits a community's residents, local businesses, and overall economy.

Consider this – The AKC licenses and sanctions more than 22,000 events across the country every year, including dog shows, agility and obedience trials, performance events, and much more. Each of these competitions generates significant revenue for local businesses including hotels, restaurants, transportation, and facility rentals, just to name a few. [Nationwide, AKC dog events have the potential to generate more than \\$1.7 billion a year in local spending.](#)

For information about the impact of dog shows in your particular state, go to [“2019 State Economic Impact By State”](#) on the AKC website. These updated one-pagers are one of many tools located in your [AKC Legislative Action Center](#) that are designed to help you make a difference for responsible dog owner-ship in your community.



American Kennel Club Recognizes the Belgian Laekenois

The American Kennel Club (AKC®), is pleased to announce that the Belgian Laekenois has received full recognition, and is eligible to compete in the Herding Group. This addition brings the number of AKC-recognized breeds to 196.

“We’re happy to have the Belgian Laekenois as part of AKC’s family of recognized breeds,” said Gina DiNardo, AKC Executive Secretary. “It’s a wonderful dog that will

make a great companion for active people. As always, we’d like to remind potential dog owners to do their research to find the right breed for their lifestyle.”

One of the four native dogs of Belgium, the Belgian Laekenois is a herding dog that was originally used to guard and tend to its owner’s flock, as well as guard linen drying in the fields. The breed is still able to guard its people and property today. These



dogs are known to be alert, intelligent and inquisitive. They’re reserved with strangers, but affectionate and friendly with those they know well. As a working dog, the Belgian Laekenois needs an active lifestyle with plenty of exercise and a job to do. Their coat requires regular brushing and occasional bathing.

Recognition does not mean the creation of a new breed. Many of the breeds that gain full

AKC-recognition have been around for many years, and some are ancient. To become an AKC recognized breed there must be a minimum number of dogs geographically distributed throughout the U.S., as well as an established breed club of responsible owners and breeders. Breeds working towards full recognition are recorded in AKC’s Foundation Stock Service® (FSS®). Additional information on the process can be found at akc.org. ■

AKC Records Over 3 Million Event Entries Annually Across Performance, Conformation, Companion and Family Dog Events



The American Kennel Club continues to be the leader in the sport of dogs with a record setting increase to 3.3 million entries in 2019 across more than 22,800 Performance, Conformation, Companion and Family Dog events.

The AKC's 135 years of commitment to dogs resulted in over 22,800 events nationwide held by 5,000 clubs and engagement with the broadest number of unique breeders, maintaining its place as the number one dog registry and sport organization in the world.

"We are beyond proud to be the foremost authority on dog sports in the world," said Doug Ljungren, AKC's Executive Vice President of Sports and Events. "The dedication and commitment of our breeders, exhibitors, clubs, business partners and staff have resulted in the unparalleled success of our sports. We enthusiastically look forward to spreading the joy of canine companionship by growing our existing sports and developing new activities that meet the interests and lifestyles of all segments of the dog-owning public."

The AKC acknowledges the accomplishments of dogs in 26 different sports. It is America's only dog organization to include

the full range of Performance Events, each of which is designed to evaluate how well purpose-bred dogs perform the function that a breed was developed to do. In every measurable category; unique breeders, events and entries, the AKC Performance Program far surpasses that of any registry worldwide on an annual basis. This includes:

- Pointing breed hunting tests and field trials
- Retriever hunting tests and field trials
- Spaniel hunting tests and field trials
- Field trials for Hounds (Beagles, Dachshunds & Basset Hounds)
- Coonhound events
- Herding events
- Earthdog events
- Lure Coursing events
- Search and Rescue
- Plus, unique breed-specific performance events held by

AKC National Breed Clubs (examples – carting and working dog sports)

The AKC administers the largest Companion Event program in the world. Companion Events, open to all breeds including mixed breeds, are designed to strengthen and demonstrate the human – canine bond. Companion Event sports include Agility, Obedience, Scent Work, Tracking and Rally.

In Conformation, the breadth and scope of shows exceed over 1,400,000 entries at events run by dedicated clubs that educate the public about responsible dog ownership, health and the human-canine bond.

AKC's Family Dog activities were created to demonstrate the manners that make dogs good family members and welcomed partners in the community. These activities include the Canine Good Citizen program, STAR Puppy, Therapy Dog, Trick Dog, Farm Dog Certified, the Fit Dog program and AKC's Temperament Test.

Additionally, the AKC has a strong affiliation program with other dog sport organizations including North America Diving Dogs (NADD), the North American Flyball Association (NAFA), the Barn Hunt Association and UpDog Challenge (disc dogs). A dog's accomplishments in these events can be recorded on their AKC pedigree.

For more information on AKC Sports, please see <https://www.akc.org/sports/> ■

A Response to HSUS's Troubled Blog of May 7, 2020

No Good news for dogs as AKC announces its most popular breeds:

The picture painted of the American Kennel Club in a blog published by HSUS in May 2020 was filled with so many inaccuracies, we've decided to try to fix the inaccuracies section by section, rather than write a full rebuttal. –AKC.

HSUS: Last year, we assisted with the care and placement of dozens of dogs rescued from the property of a [German Shepherd breeder](#) in Maryland. The breeder was cashing in on the popularity of a breed celebrated by the American Kennel Club, which has consistently placed German Shepherds at the top of its list of most popular breeds for many years now. The dogs were being kept in filthy conditions, as far as can be from the glamour of a show ring—two puppies were found in a dirty bathroom with what appeared to be fecal matter and urine on the ground, and many of the adults were filthy, fearful and thin.

FACT: AKC does not condone irresponsible behavior. This breeder was suspended by the AKC in 2018, and was not an AKC client at the time of this terrible situation in 2019. AKC is not a government agency and cannot inspect those who do not register their dogs with us.

This year, once again, German Shepherds, like Labrador retrievers, golden retrievers, English and French bulldogs and poodles, rank high on the AKC's list of top 10 most popular breeds. The list, released this week, has become a matter of concern for animal protection organizations because it serves as a reference point and incentive for puppy mills to churn out countless numbers of the top-ranking dogs each year for sale.

FACT: Loyal breed owners love to see how their breed ranks in popularity across the country. There is no proof that this list encourages improper breeding or "puppy mills." The list is based on dogs being registered with the AKC. AKC encourages [responsible breeding practices](#) and provides extensive educational information to dog owners and breeders, through AKC clubs, online programs, AKC Canine College, the funding of peer-reviewed health research and best practices for breeders. AKC discourages the improper breeding of dogs or risking their health for profit. Accusations of this nature are an insult to responsible breeders.

To add insult to injury, AKC lends misleading credentials to many indiscriminate breeders who produce these purebred dogs, without regard for the problems caused by indiscriminate breeding, inbreeding and the lack of socialization for the animals.

FACT: This is an inaccurate accusation. AKC does not provide credentials to breeders. However, we are very proud of our industry-leading voluntary programs through which professional



breeders access continuing science-based breeder education, information about best practices, and breed-based health tests for parents to produce healthy puppies. AKC is proud of our hobby breeders who are dedicated to preserving the heritage of their breeds, educating the public about their amazing breeds, and breeding health-tested parents for healthy, happy puppies.

The AKC is also the **ONLY** private all-breed dog registry with an inspection program that conducts thousands of inspections per year. If our inspectors find a problem, we work tirelessly to appropriately address the issue on behalf of the welfare of dogs, including reporting negligence/cruelty to the appropriate authorities.

On top of that, the AKC vigorously opposes any attempts made by lawmakers and organizations like ours to improve the treatment of animals in puppy mills. AKC dog breeders have often appeared in our annual [Horrible Hundred](#) reports; some have been charged with animal cruelty for keeping their dogs in dreadful conditions.

FACT: Most of the people HSUS tries to connect to AKC in its "Horrible Hundred" list have not registered with the AKC in years. AKC is not a government agency and can only inspect breeders that are actively breeding dogs AND registering their dogs with the AKC. Breeders who are active AKC clients are inspected as high priority to ensure that they are properly caring for their dogs.

In March, [I told you about a dog](#) rescued from an AKC breeder in Caldwell County, North Carolina, who was all skin and bones, riddled with parasites and lethargic. She

Continued on next page

was also pregnant with seven puppies, four of whom died at birth; the remaining three required hospitalization and round-the-clock care to survive.

FACT: The condition of this dog is upsetting and never should have happened. The breeder in this case had been suspended by AKC the year before this happened.

One of the most heartbreaking stories is that of Wild Bill. Once an AKC champion dog, this Australian Cattle Dog competed in AKC events, winning ribbons for his good looks. Tragically, after his glory days in the show ring were over, Wild Bill was discovered by local law enforcement officials at a Mississippi puppy mill, where he was starving in a filthy, rusted crate with inches of feces-infested water around him. But if that wasn't bad enough, an AKC inspector who saw it all gave the kennel a clean inspection report.

FACT: The facts of this case from 6 years ago have been and continue to be distorted for emotional gain. This breeder has been suspended from AKC for almost 6 years. AKC's inspection was conducted with a police officer onsite who did not see any conditions that were concerning. When the officer returned to the kennel for a follow-up a week later, the conditions were not appropriate, and the proper care was not being administered.

Although it registers only pure breeds, the AKC doesn't hesitate to profit from "designer" mixed breeds like "lab-raddoodles" and "goldendoodles" either. These dogs are in demand because of beliefs that every lab or golden retriever is friendly with children and that poodles are hypoallergenic. The hype is misleading, because mixing any breed with a poodle does not automatically make the offspring non-shedding or allergen-free, yet pet stores don't hesitate to cash in on the misconception.

FACT: The AKC does not encourage the cross-breeding of dogs for designer mixes. Mixed breeds lack the of predictability of characteristics of carefully bred purebred dogs because there is no way to track or ensure which traits the offspring receive. Sadly, there are also significant health issues associated with designer mixes. Having said that, AKC celebrates all dogs, and we encourage all dog owners – whether they own a purebred dog or a mixed-breed – to participate in the many family-friendly events we offer for all dogs and their owners.

These dogs also frequently suffer from genetic problems, as do other popular AKC breeds like bulldogs, which can lead to big medical bills and heartbreak for those who buy them. AKC partners with Petland, the nation's largest chain of puppy-selling pet stores, offering to enroll mixed breed dogs the store sells in its "Canine Partners program." The program includes an "official certificate from the American Kennel Club honoring your dog," and the eligibility to participate in agility and other performance events, all for a fee.

FACT: AKC's Canine Partners Program is open to all dogs that cannot otherwise register with the AKC pedigree registry, in-

cluding dogs from shelters and other retailers, not just Petland. All dogs, whether they participate in the pedigree registry or the Canine Partners Program, pay a one-time enrollment fee of approximately \$35 and can participate in a wide range of events and services.

Petland, which notoriously sources puppy mill dogs, has been a [subject of eight HSUS investigations](#) for its terrible mistreatment of the animals in its care. Many Petland stores boast "AKC Inspected" signs.

FACT: AKC inspects hundreds of pet stores where dogs may be obtained and have done so for decades. We do this voluntarily because we care deeply about the health and wellbeing of dogs –not because of any legal requirement. If we find any issue of animal mistreatment, it is reported to authorities immediately. Mistreatment of dogs is never taken lightly by AKC.

The AKC also regularly uses its [platform](#) to bash animal rescues – the same groups that help mixed breed dogs who are homeless and in need.

FACT: This is inaccurate. AKC is not opposed to rescue, in fact AKC is the largest breed rescue network in the country, working with responsible breed-based rescues located throughout the country. There are many dogs who were responsibly rehomed or rescued at some point in their lives, who go on to participate in AKC Canine Partners programs and are now champions across multiple AKC sports. Two AKC charitable affiliates – [the AKC Humane Fund](#) and [AKC Reunite](#) – provide direct donations to rescues and shelters.

However, AKC DOES have a very strong concern about irresponsible "rescues" or pet flippers who take advantage of well-intentioned "adopters" by selling them unhealthy dogs at high prices and claiming that they are superior to responsibly-bred and raised breed dogs.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [has provided estimates](#) that more than one million dogs are imported into the U.S. each year. Many of these dogs are bred by foreign puppy farmers in substandard conditions specifically for the U.S. "rescue" dog markets and are imported into the U.S. with [invalid or fraudulent veterinary paperwork](#). Sadly, irresponsible rescues, which piggyback on the good work of responsible rescues, put public health and the safety of the animals, their handlers and their future owners at risk. Just a year ago, CDC banned imports of dogs from Egypt because several dogs with rabies were imported and placed into rescue.

Right now, it is also opposing a common-sense law in Massachusetts that would protect dogs from being left outside in harsh weather. And it regularly fights local and state laws that protect dogs in puppy mills, including laws that prohibit the sale of puppy mill puppies in pet stores.

FACT: The AKC is pleased to express the concerns of responsi-

ble dog owners in Massachusetts about H 1822/S 989, a one-size-fits-all proposal that would penalize the keeping of dogs in certain humane situations and fail to recognize appropriate breed-specific care guidelines. Breeds such as Alaskan Malamutes and Siberian Huskies that are popular in Massachusetts are uniquely adapted to colder temperatures, and other dogs such as working K9s need to be acclimated to a multitude of conditions in order to be safe when required to work. AKC is joined by the Massachusetts Police Benevolent Association, the Boston Police Department, the National Animal Interest Alliance and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation in urging changes to the proposal that recognize dogs' unique characteristics while also ensuring that dogs are not left in conditions that pose harm to them.

One of the things we have learned during this crisis is just how many Americans are eager to adopt and foster dogs from animal shelters. Shelters do amazing work, and they should always be the first stop for anyone looking to bring a pet home but if families are unable to find a rescue dog, [seeking out a responsible dog breeder](#) is key to ending the puppy mill trade. Dogs are truly our best friends, and their companionship—especially in these stressful times—is invaluable.

Dogs are truly our best friends, and their companionship—especially in these stressful times—is invaluable.

FACT: This is a statement we can all agree on. However, it's also important to remember that *responsible dog ownership is about more than how our dogs make us feel – it's also about our commitment to them.* AKC has long taught that one of the most important things to consider when getting a dog is doing your homework and choosing the right pet for your lifestyle. When people choose a pet with known, predictable character-

istics (size, grooming needs, exercise requirements, personality, good with kids, etc.) that pet is less likely to end up in a shelter.

We agree that shelters do great work, and we are proud of the support we and our clubs give to shelters around the country. We also recognize that a shelter or rescue dog that may have special needs is not the right fit for everyone. That's OK. With Americans importing more than 1 million dogs each year, many of which are destined for retail shelters; it's most important for future dog owners to carefully consider all lifestyle factors and purchase options – whether it be a breeder, a shelter, a rescue or a pet store – and make a thoughtful decision about what is most responsible and appropriate for your needs.

They deserve to be celebrated, and as long as the AKC contributes to their suffering, we will continue to fight the group with all of our might.

We find it odd that HSUS is committing itself to fighting one of the most respected and responsible dog organizations in the country instead of focusing on its mission of helping animals.

FACT: AKC does not contribute to the suffering of dogs. We urge you to check your facts. You will find AKC cares deeply about dogs and does [more good for dogs](#) than any other organization. It is true we do not do extensive fundraising or attack other organizations. Our approach is and remains focused on positive approaches to advocating for the purebred dog, promoting responsible dog ownership, advancing the health and wellbeing of all dogs, and working to protect the rights of dog owners. Of course, we will fight for the dogs we love, breed, and have a beautiful timeless bond with. Assertions otherwise, like many of those in HSUS's blog, are patently false. ■



AKC Government Relation Department
(919) 816-3720 • doglaw@akc.com
www.akc.org/government-relations
