

Taking Command

A publication of the AKC Government Relations Department



What's New from AKC Government Relations

December was a very busy month for the AKC GR team. In addition to legislative/policy tracking, updates and advocacy, the team also updated and prepared a number of new resources highlighted in this newsletter. These include two new Key Issues webpages on pet choice/sales bans and service dogs; and new resources on the legal status of dogs, breed specific laws, and new tips and guidance on how to advocate for your rights as dog owners. All of this is available for you at www.akcgr.org.

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What the Recently Announced Service Animal Air Travel Rules Mean for Travelers

[Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced new rules for the use of service animals in air travel.](#) Here is a summary of the changes and what led to them.

A federal law known as the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in air travel. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for carrying out the ACAA, and creates and enforces rules that define the rights of passengers and the obligations of airlines under that law.

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Election Wrap-Up: The Votes Are All In ... Now Your Job Begins!

Now is one of the most important times of the year for you as responsible dog owners, breeders, and exhibitors to reach out to newly elected and reelected federal, state and local lawmakers. The election campaigns have concluded and the preparations for the upcoming legislative sessions are underway. Many new lawmakers –and even returning lawmakers—likely know little about canine legislation or policy. More importantly, it’s likely they know even less about how passionate you are about such issues.

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Open Letter to Federal, State & Local Government Officials Regarding Pets and COVID-19 Precautions

We in the responsible pet care community commend the swift actions you and your peers across the country are taking to protect human health and reduce the current surge in COVID-19 infection cases. As you take these critical steps to control the spread of the disease, including again directing business closures, we urge you to continue to take into account the well-being of the pets and other animals loved and cared for by the citizens in your communities.

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Tales from the Trenches – Working Together: A Local Story of Success

At their December meeting, the Westtown Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, Planning Commission voted to recommend a proposed dog ordinance to the Board of Supervisors for final approval. Getting to this point was the culmination of significant effort by local resident, Christine Allen, the Pennsylvania Federation of Dog Clubs (PFDC), and AKC Government Relations (AKC GR) to make sure the ordinance did not have any negative impact on responsible dog owners.

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New in the AKC Legislative Action Center: Updated Issue Analysis on Breeder Regulations

Many legislatures are beginning to draft and file bills to consider in their 2021 sessions. In addition, many county and city leaders will be taking office and discussing ordinances in early January.

The issue of regulating breeders continues to be prominent on both the state and local levels. The Texas Legislature and City of Chicago are two examples of government bodies that will likely be considering breeder regulations in early 2021.

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New in the Legislative Action Center: AKC GR Introduces Service Dog Key Issues Webpage

The American Kennel Club recognizes the tremendous value of working dogs to society, and in particular, the life-changing impact that properly trained service dogs bring to individuals with disabilities.

To help people better understand rules and policies related to service dogs, AKC Government Relations has developed a new [Key Issues webpage in the AKC Legislative Action Center regarding service dogs](#). The page contains issue analyses, resources and talking points for clubs, individuals and lawmakers.

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New in the AKC Legislative Action Center: Updated Issue Analysis on Breed-Specific Laws

Currently, the Michigan Senate is debating whether to pass a law that would prohibit local governments from passing laws regulating specific dog breeds.

In November, voters in Denver overwhelmingly approved a ballot measure that repealed a 30-year ban on certain breeds in city limits.

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AKC Introduces new Key Issues Web Resources on Pet Choice/ Retail Sales Bans

AKC Government Relations continues to see proposals introduced on the state and local levels throughout the United States that seek to limit pet stores to only sourcing animals from rescues and shelters.

The AKC advocates for responsible dog owners and supports strong enforcement of local and state animal cruelty laws as well as the federal Animal Welfare Act, which provides consistent minimum standards of care, regulatory oversight and inspections of pet breeders, dealers, and other important players in the pet industry.

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New in the Legislative Action Center: New Resources on Legal Classification of Animals Issues

Today the AKC Government Relations Department released new, easy to use one-page overviews on legislative topics that have the potential to impact the legal classification of animals : [Animals Need Responsible Owners, Not Guardians](#) and [Laws that Provide Court-Appointed Animal Advocates Could Undermine Animal Welfare](#).

The current legal classification of animals as property is important because it provides that dog owners have both legal rights and legal responsibilities with respect to their animals.

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Legislative Information and Updates

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are back in session, and 8 states are in session currently or in special session this month. To date this year, AKC Government Relations (GR) has monitored more than 3,300 bills at the federal, state, and local levels. The COVID-19 outbreak and response continue to have a dramatic impact on legislatures and policymaking at all levels of government. Below are some highlights of pending canine legislation issues across the country:

Below are some highlights of pending legislation impacting dog ownership and dog owners' rights 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.

In addition to tracking and responding to legislative proposals, AKC Government Relations addresses dog-related regulatory proposals from the U.S. federal government, all 50 states, and the District of Columbia. AKC Government Relations is currently tracking approximately 750 regulatory proposals, the majority of which concern land use/hunting regulations and those governing the practice of veterinary medicine. Click the links below to read highlights from this past month.

AKC GR's Regulatory Resource Center provides updates on our federal and state regulatory work that may impact dog owners. Check it out at <https://akcgr.org/akc/regcenter>.

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

Regulatory

Regulatory issues at the federal, state, and local levels

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



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This email was sent to: emily.holmes@akc.org. You are subscribed to AKC Government Relations news.

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