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# Taking Command

A publication of the AKC Government Relations Department

## AKC's Taking Command



### What's New from AKC Government Relations

As we prepare for the 2021 sessions, we're also looking back on 2020.

2020 was a memorable year for many reasons. With fewer public events and more Americans working from home, dog lovers increasingly relied on their four-footed friends for comfort and the opportunity to participate in a whole new, fun world of AKC virtual events and competitions.

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### Year in Review: 2020 Was Record Legislative Year for AKC Government Relations

AKC Government Relations had another record year in 2020, with the team tracking some 4,211 bills in 2020. This is an 83% increase over the 2,300 bills tracked in 2019.

The largest category of new bills tracked (716 total) were related to COVID-19, many of which had the potential to impact dog owners and ownership, dog services (such as pet food retailers or groomers) and AKC sports.

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## **Latest Capitol Canine Profile, Leading Canine Policy, Health & Education**

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

This issue's Capitol Canine Spotlight features Congressman Tim Ryan.

In this issue, we celebrate the diversity of dogs – and highlight some of our diverse educational and charitable programs that represent our mission to advance canine health and well-being and promote responsible dog ownership.

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## **New Resources on Benefits of Dogs Shows Provide A Way to Connect with Your Lawmakers**

The AKC National Championship is a pinnacle in the sport of dogs and a celebration of the preservation and future of the remarkable variety of dog breeds. This year's show was particularly special because it highlighted the special dedication of breeders and breed enthusiasts to showcase their dogs and the breeds even under challenging circumstances.

Throughout the pandemic, as many AKC clubs work with local officials to obtain permission to hold events, it has become increasingly evident that many lawmakers do understand of what a dog show is and why they matter

for dogs, breeders, and the community.

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## **AKC Lauded for 2020 National Championship Dog Show Safety Protocols**

The American Kennel Club's commitment to event participant safety during the COVID-19 pandemic received high marks from Orange County Convention Center (OCCC) leadership.

"In December, the AKC National Championship Presented by Royal Canin hosted nearly 6,000 attendees across nearly 1 million square feet of exhibit space in the North-South Building.

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## **New in the Legislative Action Center: Sample Introduction Letters for You and Your Club**

As part of AKC Government Relations' continued effort to empower dog owners and advocates, we will be continuing to provide new and updated articles and issue analyses in the GR Toolbox section of the AKC Legislative Action Center throughout the coming year. With the upcoming legislative sessions upon us across the United States, now is the time to make initial contact and start developing a relationship with your elected representatives. It is essential they know you are interested in issues related to dog ownership and that you can be a resource to them.

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## **AKC Government Relations Releases Comprehensive Policy Brief on Consumer Protection/'Puppy Lemon Laws'**

AKC Government Relations (AKC GR) is pleased to announce the release of its latest comprehensive public policy brief: [Consumer Protection/'Puppy Lemon Laws'](#). This new resource provides lawmakers, advocates, and the public with in-depth analysis and model language to support sound consumer protection laws for puppy purchasers and breeders alike.

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## **Advocacy Tips & Tools—Using QR Codes to Reduce Shared Paper**

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically increased use of Zoom and other virtual meeting services rather than face-to-face gatherings, welcoming handshakes, and the exchange of business cards. But what about meetings and outreach opportunities that continue to be held in person?

What are alternatives to passing brochures from hand to hand or holding up pieces of paper behind a plexiglass divider at an educational table? How can materials be exchanged while maintaining safe social distancing when travel and meeting restrictions begin to ease again?

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## **Bebout Award Presented to New Hampshire's Dog Owners of the Granite State Federation**

On December 11, 2020, the American Kennel Club's (AKC) Walter Bebout Memorial Award for Leadership in Canine Legislation was presented to President Angela Ferrari and members of the New Hampshire Dog Owners of the Granite State (NH DOGS) federation. The federation has been protecting the interests of New Hampshire pet owners since 1991.

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## **Legislative Information and Updates**

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are back in session and will return to organizing for the new Congress after Wednesday's inauguration. Forty-three states are also in session currently or in special session this month.

Listed 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](http://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 carried over from 2020, 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 [2021 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](mailto:doglaw@akc.org) for more information or to let us know what's happening in your local community.

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