



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.*

Healthy Dog Importation Act and Local U.S. Breeders Offer Alternative to Unhealthy Canine Imports and Emergency Bans

On July 14, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) implemented a ban on the importation of dogs from more than 100 countries that are "high risk" for rabies and other highly contagious diseases, many of which can jump species and infect humans.

The action presents a major wake-up call about the dangers of importing foreign dogs from certain regions.

"This temporary action is necessary to ensure the health and safety of dogs imported into the United States and to protect the public's health against the reintroduction of canine rabies virus variant (CRVV) into the United States," the CDC said in a [recent statement](#) announcing the decision.

The ban is designed to protect against a public health crisis spawned by an exponential increase in the number of potentially contagious diseased dogs being imported into the U.S.

Continued on page 4

INSIDE

Perspectives.....	1
Capitol Canine Spotlight.....	1
Capitol Canine Staff Spotlight.....	3
Healthy Dog Importation Act.....	5
Canine Tick Research.....	7
K-9 Cop Matching Grants.....	8

CAPITOL CANINE SPOTLIGHT

Senator Thom Tillis



Photos courtesy office of Senator Thom Tillis

From the stray dogs his family took in when he was a boy, to current Senate office dogs Mitch and Theo, Senator Thom Tillis (NC) has owned and trained dogs his entire life. And as one of six children, he learned at a young age the value of a well-trained dog.

"The first dog I remember was Hector. We lived at the end of a long country road where people would take dogs and drop them off. Back in the 1960s in a rural area outside of Jacksonville, Florida, they really didn't have pet rescue programs. We would bring the dogs in and feed them," Tillis said.

"Hector was a dog left at the end of the road. He became our family dog, protective and sweet. We later had Pepper, a Poodle mix. When I was a teenager, I remember I got caught coming in after curfew because Pepper would wait at the top of the steps and bark that he was happy to see me. I was busted by the family dog," Tillis laughed.

Senator Tillis began training dogs in earnest more than 30 years ago

Continued on next page

when he was given a dog named Scarlet. “She looked like a huge Boxer. My wife, who was born and raised in Boston, was pregnant with our first child and she was completely convinced I was going to have a redneck dog,” Tillis said.

“I wanted to prove the point that dogs are reflections of their owners. That’s when I learned about dog obedience training, and Scarlet became an amazingly obedient dog. I’ve been training dogs ever since,” Tillis said.

“I trained Scarlet, Maggie, Nikki, and other dogs—AKC registered Boxers, Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, a Lhasa Apso—I’ve probably had 11 dogs over the last 30 years” Tillis said. “There’s nothing more enjoyable than a well-trained dog. Dogs like learning, and they like being able to communicate with their owners.”

His last Boxer, Ike, died in 2018 at about 12 years of age. “I love a Boxer’s energy. They probably maintain a puppy sort of mentality longer than just about any breed I’ve ever had. Very playful and great with kids,” Tillis said.

Current dog Mitch, a cockapoo, knows 35 distinct commands. “Mitch is a brilliant dog. We’re doing focus training, and we’re working toward learning at least 50 commands,” Tillis said.

Puppy Theodore “Theo,” a bernedoodle, joined the Tillis family in May of 2021. Senator Tillis immediately began Theo’s training.

“I started Theo’s very basic training and handling on the ride home. I think a big mistake some people make is only taking dogs in a car when they’re going to the vet or somewhere that can be unpleasant, versus training them to be a good car dog like Mitch. You make them excited about getting in a car to go to the store or go for a hike,” Tillis said.

Tillis and several of his Capitol staff members regularly bring dogs to the office. “We’ve got lots of dogs here. One of the reasons I bring Theo is so he gets opportunities to socialize. I love it up here because I have a village to help me out with training!”

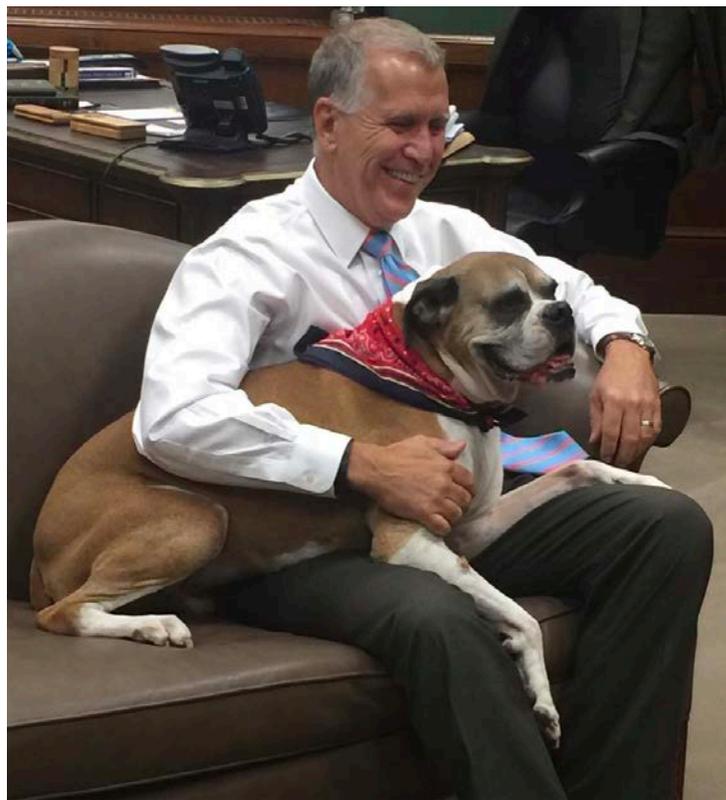
Senator Tillis joins the American Kennel Club in urging prospective dog owners to do their research when selecting a dog.

“As part of making the decision to own a dog, people should make a commitment. The beauty of purebreds is you can know the fundamental characteristics of the breed. Get a breed or mix of breeds that is consistent with your lifestyle and with your future lifestyle.” Tillis said.

“I think the concept of dog owner literacy is pretty important. My daughter recently got a four-month-old dog, and he’s a really smart dog. He got some basic training from a foster family, and I gave her a book for novice dog trainers,” Tillis said.

“Not all dogs need to understand 35 to 50 commands, but every dog needs to understand five to ten basic commands that will help it learn to be a better dog!”

Not only is Senator Tillis an experienced dog trainer him-



self, he recognizes the contributions of purpose-bred and trained dogs.

“I was just reading an article about specialized dogs for detecting COVID. So obviously dogs serving in day-to-day functions are very important. Dogs in law enforcement, service dogs for wounded warriors, service animals—aside from the fact that I have a huge affinity for dogs, they have proved to be incredible working partners,” Tillis said. ■

Did You Know?

- A bernedoodle is mixed breed dog comprised of Bernese Mountain Dog and Poodle. A cockapoo is a Cocker Spaniel and Poodle cross.
- Mixed breeds are welcome to participate in all AKC events, except breed-specific competitions. Mixed breeds compete alongside purebreds as “All American Dogs.”
- Medical scent evaluation dogs are being studied for their abilities to detect Covid-19 in breath, sweat, and other applications.
- A Border Collie named Chaser attained the vocabulary of a 3-year-old child. She learned the names of more than 1,000 objects and demonstrated she understood the meanings of those names in a series of hundreds of fetch trials.
- Numerous studies indicate that dogs in the workplace can have a positive influence on individual and collective well-being of organizational members.

Capitol Canine Staff Spotlight

For more than 10 years, *In Session* has highlighted dog-loving members of the U.S. House and Senate. But it's not only members who bring their beloved dogs to work. Often the office dog belongs to a staff member.

In some offices, like the office of Senator Thom Tillis, there are so many dog-owning staff that a schedule has to be developed for which dogs come into the office on any particular day!

We're pleased to introduce a new feature that highlights staff and their dogs.



Smiling Pembroke Welsh Corgi Charlie belongs to **Senior Advisor Daniel Keylin**. Charlie enjoys belly rubs and herding other dogs, like office mate Tilly, the Boston Terrier. Charlie and owner Daniel have been members of Team Tillis since 2014.



Boston Terrier Tilly has been coming to the office since she was nine weeks old, and attended a Senate committee hearing with Senator Tillis on her very first day at work. **Digital Director Lexie Rock**, Tilly's owner, reports that Tilly loves greeting everyone, enjoys sunbathing in the window at the Dirksen Senate Building, and participates in the bipawtisan pet parade hosted each year by Team Tillis. Tilly gets her good looks from her AKC Grand Champion sire, and even has her own social media page.



Golden Retrievers Bonnie and Freddie belong to **Chief Counsel Brad Watts**. Five-year-old Bonnie, a.k.a. "the Princess", currently holds the position of Chief Squirrel Chaser for the Senate GOP. Three-year-old Freddie, a.k.a. "Slobbers", advances the policy platform of "build a Senate dog park and make the cats pay for it."





As a puppy, Labrador Retriever Winnie entered training as a bomb sniffing dog. That didn't work out, so she moved to DC to be a city dog where she puts her talented snout to good use by being first in the kitchen when she hears a bag crinkle. On her first visit to the office with **Senior Counsel Seth Williford**, she thought "table manners" meant jumping on a conference table, a feat not since repeated. Winnie loves visiting the office and later curling up in her designated chair at home.

Vizsla Riley and **Department of Defense Fellow Brandon Woods** enjoy hiking, running, and catching flying discs. Described by Brandon as a "ball of uncoordinated energy," Riley has also been known to grab a nap in an office walkway and refuse to move as everyone steps around her. On her first office visit, Riley and Boston Terrier Tilly used the Senate office as a play place, where Riley met Senator Tillis before Brandon did! ■

PERSPECTIVES, continued from page 1

each year that are often placed in rescues and then into the homes of well-meaning but unsuspecting Americans.

In 2019, the CDC estimated that approximately one million dogs were imported into the U.S., many of which enter with forged or invalid health certificates. Many people are surprised by the numbers of dogs imported into the U.S. In fact, the demand for pet dogs in the U.S.—without accounting for population growth—was more than 8 million dogs annually in 2019—before a spike in demand due to the pandemic.

Currently, U.S. breeders are unable to meet the demand for puppies, which creates opportunities for breeders and sellers overseas where there is little oversight of animal health and welfare. Of the one million dogs imported annually, approximately 110,000 originate from countries with "high risk" for rabies and other diseases.

The CDC's import ban is the immediate result of recent cases involving the importation of sick and contagious dogs for the retail rescue market—including dogs carrying canine rabies, a disease variant that was eliminated in the U.S. in 2007. However, it is also the inevitable result of a generation of populist but scientifically unsound laws that have demonized and discouraged dog breeding in the United States – sometimes even stating inaccurately that dogs from random sources are healthier or preferable to purpose-bred pets. Passage of such laws have regulated out of business some of America's best domestic pet breeders, and with it, dramatically curtailing our own supply of healthy purpose-bred dogs.

In recent years, laws to establish one-size-fits-all mandates designed for professional breeders have undermined the ability of small scale and specialty breeders to provide appropriate care for their pets. When faced with over-reaching regulations that could harm the wellbeing of their pets, many small breeders simply ceased operating. This created a vacuum that incentivizes large, substandard "puppy mill" operations overseas whose animals ultimately end up in U.S. pet markets, often marketed as "rescue" pets. Many of the problematic laws were developed at the state and local level. Now, aspects of the proposed Puppy Protection Act (HR 2840/S1385) and other one-size fits all federal proposals threaten to exacerbate the problem.

The CDC's ban is warranted as a temporary fix given how dangerous the situation has become. But for the longer term, policy makers should take two tacks.

First is passage of the bipartisan Healthy Dog Importation Act of 2021 introduced by Reps. Kurt Schrader, DVM (D-OR-5), Dusty Johnson (R-SD-At Large), and Senators Chuck Grassley (IA) and Tina Smith (MN). The measure is also supported by the American Veterinary Medical Association and numerous other animal and public health experts (see letter, p. 6). It would require validated health certifications for all dogs imported into the U.S., comparable to what most other countries have required for years. This bill goes beyond a blanket ban and instead focuses on assuring the health of imported animals while also allowing responsible import of health dogs from a wider range of countries.

Second is to recognize the immense public health value of high-quality local pet breeders in our own communities. Encouraging new and responsible domestic breeders who can be a local source of expertise and quality pets will remove the incentive for mass imports of randomly sourced or unhealthy dogs.

With the annual demand for pet dogs in the U.S. growing, and unhealthy imports revealing new zoonotic threats, it's time to raise our import health standards and welcome back responsible U.S. dog breeders as a bulwark against the importation of public health dangers.

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

See page 5 to learn more about the Healthy Dog Importation Act. As always, please, don't hesitate to contact me if I can answer questions or be of assistance.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila Goffe". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sheila Goffe
Vice President, Government Relations
shg@akc.org



Safeguarding Public Health – The Healthy Dog Importation Act of 2021

As our nation seeks to prevent the introduction and spread of dangerous diseases in the U.S., lax importation regulations and enforcement should not be overlooked.

Problem: The U.S. demand for pet dogs –without accounting for population growth – is more than 8 million dogs annually¹. To meet this demand, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that up to 1.245 million dogs are imported into the U.S. each year.² *Exponential growth in dog imports from a wide range of overseas sources has resulted in recent incidents of dogs with non- native parasites and zoonotic diseases such as rabies, viral infections, canine influenza, brucellosis and others, being imported and passed onto the general public.* Current pet import oversight mechanisms established prior to the exponential growth of imports are unable to protect against this public and animal health threat. **CDC announced on June 14, 2021 that they would temporarily suspend dog imports from over 100 countries to protect public health against the reintroduction of canine rabies virus variant (CRVV) into the United States and to ensure the welfare of dogs being imported into the U.S.**³ The suspension does not address diseases other than rabies, and applies to only 6% of imported dogs.

Solution: The Healthy Dogs Importation Act provides the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with additional tools to monitor and safeguard the health of dogs being imported into the U.S. This will ensure that all dogs entering the country are healthy and not at risk to spread dangerous diseases that could adversely impact animal and public health. Specifically:

- The Secretary of Agriculture is provided authority to determine which vaccinations and other health information is required for entry of dogs into the U.S. This authority will be carried out by USDA's Veterinary Services (VS) division.
- Every dog entering the U.S. must be accompanied by a certificate of veterinary inspection (health certificate), issued by a licensed veterinarian accredited by a competent veterinary authority recognized by the Secretary. The health certificate must certify that the dog has received all required vaccinations and demonstrated negative test results.
- Health certificates must be submitted to USDA, which will maintain a centralized, publicly available data base. Required documentation may be submitted electronically. All submitted information will be made available to the secretaries of Health and Human Services (CDC), Commerce, and Homeland Security (CBP) to promote interagency coordination and facilitate verification upon arrival in the U.S.
- All dogs imported must be permanently identified.
- The Secretary of Agriculture may set fees for the issuance of importation permits to offset costs for increased monitoring and oversight.

Background -- Current Federal Oversight of Dogs Imported into the United States

CDC estimates that up to 1.245 million dogs are imported into the U.S. each year.⁴ For the estimated 113,000 imported from countries that are at a high-risk for rabies transmission, CDC requires a rabies vaccination certificate, but no other health documentation or identification. For the 950,000 imported from rabies-free or low-risk countries, CDC requires no documentation or vaccination. A visual inspection provided by Customs and Border Protection personnel at the first port of entry is the only screening required for these dogs.

USDA-APHIS has separate regulatory authority over dogs imported for resale, which is defined as “dogs imported for sale in wholesale channels, at retail, and for adoption after arrival in the United States”. USDA's import requirements are more stringent than CDC's, unfortunately they apply to only half of a percent of all imported dogs (35 dogs in 2017; 2,021 dogs in 2018; and 6,263 dogs in 2019 were subject to USDA's import requirements).⁵

Health Concerns Related to the Importation of Dogs

An increasing number of unhealthy dogs entering the U.S is alarming public and animal health officials.

- July 2021 – Following the importation of a rescue dog from Azerbaijan carrying CRVV rabies (eliminated in the U.S. in 2007)⁶ CDC implemented a temporary ban on the import of dogs from 110 countries deemed “high risk” for rabies and other contagious diseases.⁷
- May 2019 – CDC announced a temporary ban on dogs from that Egypt, “citing multiple⁸ instances of dogs that contracted rabies in Egypt being brought to the U.S. in recent years.”
- March 2019 – Scientists at Cornell University's Animal Health Diagnostic Center identified a strain of Asian canine distemper virus never before reported in North America, determining that the source was likely a dog from a Korean meat market. These scientists also attributed a 2015 Chicago area outbreak of canine influenza to dogs imported from Korea and estimated that dog owners have spent \$75 million on diagnostic testing and vaccinations to combat the outbreak.⁹
- November 2019 – An article in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association raised concerns about importation of dogs from certain regions of the world, including China, stating that, “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.”¹⁰

The ongoing fight to combat the COVID-19 pandemic has crystallized public health officials con-

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cern about zoonotic diseases, which can be spread between animals and humans.¹¹ The CDC reports that 60 percent of all infectious diseases and 3 out of 4 emerging diseases such as coronaviruses can be spread from animals to humans. Dr. Megan Jacob, Director of Diagnostic Laboratories, North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine highlighted public health concerns

regarding the transmission of diseases from imported dogs to other dogs, animals and humans, stating that “In addition to bringing viruses or bacteria that may be transmissible to other dogs, there is certainly a risk that the animals—any animal—could carry an infecting agent that could be passed to people or other animal species.”¹² ■

¹ Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/animalia/wp/2017/02/08/does-america-have-enough-dogs-for-all-the-people-who-want-one/>

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

³ CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/importation/bringing-an-animal-into-the-united-states/high-risk-dog-ban-frn.html>

⁴ Ibid, 2

⁵ USDA, Report on Importation of Live Dogs into the United States, June 25, 2019

⁶ Associated Press, Rabid Dogs Imported into U.S. Sparks Multistate Investigation, June 18, 2021. <https://apnews.com/article/lifestyle-health-science-dogs-b333f43b6e590131d7b0616188bc65a21>

⁷ CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/importation/bringing-an-animal-into-the-united-states/high-risk-dog-ban-frn.html>

⁸ CDC, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/05/10/2019-09654/notice-of-temporary-suspension-of-dogs-entering-the-united-states-from-egypt>

⁹ Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/news/20190318/new-strain-canine-distemper-virus-arrives-north-america>

¹⁰ 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>

¹¹ CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/basics/zoonotic-diseases.html>

¹² Ibid, 5

June 29, 2021

The Honorable Kurt Schrader
2431 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dusty Johnson
1714 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Schrader and Johnson:

We, the undersigned groups, write today to thank you for your leadership in protecting animal and human health by strengthening the federal oversight of imported canines. At the request of Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2019 issued a study that determined over one million dogs are imported into the U.S. annually, but less than one percent of those animals undergo an adequate health screening to ensure they are healthy enough to travel and free of disease and parasites before entering the country.

In the absence of proper health requirements, imported dogs have been responsible for the introduction and transmission of diseases and pests into the U.S., including rabies, canine influenza, leptospirosis, melioidosis, onchocerosis and screwworm. There is also a growing concern amongst the producer groups that imported dogs and even their crates and bedding could transfer a foreign animal disease that will devastate the U.S. livestock industry.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 6 out of every 10 known human infectious diseases, including 75 percent of new diseases discovered in the last decade, are zoonotic in origin. Despite this, the U.S. lacks even the most basic health requirements such as proper veterinary care prior to transporting a canine, appropriate identification and vaccination of dogs before arrival in the U.S., and strong coordination between the federal agencies that oversee animal and public health. Our system falls far short of those of other developed countries, who have stringent requirements for the movement of and importation of all animals.

We thank you for reintroducing the Healthy Dog Importation Act, which addresses the current gaps in oversight and prioritizes the prevention of disease introduction from imported dogs that threatens both animal and public health.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Food Safety & Public Health Veterinarians
American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Kennel Club
American Pet Products Association
American Sheep Industry Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Health Institute
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Indiana Veterinary Medical Association

International Pet and Animal Transportation Association
Master of Foxhounds Association of America
National Animal Interest Alliance
National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians
National Pork Producers Council
Oregon Veterinary Medical Association
Pet Food Institute
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council
Protect the Harvest
World Pet Association



The AKC Canine Health Foundation Funds \$920,000 in Canine Tick-Borne Disease Research



The AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) Tick-Borne Disease Research Initiative was created in 2016 to address the growing threat of tick-borne disease to canine and human health. Disease occurs when ticks infected with a pathogen directly bites a dog or human and transmit the pathogen into the body. Many tick-borne pathogens infect dogs and can also infect humans.

“As tick species expand their geographical range and more tick-borne infections are discovered, the AKC Canine Health Foundation and its donors will continue to fund quality health research to help tackle these important diseases,” says Andrea Fiumefreddo, CHF Director of Programs & Operations.

“Current studies are focused on developing more accurate diagnostic tests and understanding how the canine immune system responds to infection. Results may help us alter clinical outcomes for infected dogs. In addition, tick-borne infection rates in dogs often signal areas of high risk or emerging disease for humans. So this research really does impact both dog and human family members,” Fiumefreddo said.

The geographic distribution of ticks is spreading and can change yearly by season and region of the United States. CHF is taking a One Health action to address the prevalence, diagnosis, and treatment of tick-borne disease. The most important tick-borne diseases of dogs are Ehrlichiosis, Anaplasmosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Hepatozoonosis, Babesiosis, Bartonellosis, Hemotropic Mycoplasmosis, and Lyme disease. All can have serious health consequences, and infection rates have been on the rise over the past five years. The feeding time required for disease transmission from a tick to a dog or person can be as little as 3 – 6 hours!

Since 1995, CHF and its donors have invested more than \$920,000 in 12 grants to study tick-borne disease. Current grants explore better methods to detect tick-borne diseases and recognize new pathogens, plus improve our understanding of how ticks locate dog hosts and how the canine immune system responds to tick-borne infections.

\$920,000 invested in tick-borne disease research since 1995.

Why Study It?

- The geographical range of tick species in North America is expanding
- The incidence of tick-borne diseases reported in dogs and humans continues to rise

- To understand why some infected dogs remain asymptomatic, while others develop life-threatening illness
- Dogs infected with tick-borne disease agents can act as sentinels for the same diseases in people
- Accurate diagnosis of co-infections (simultaneous infection with multiple vector-borne organisms) will facilitate early and comprehensive treatment
- Understanding which immune cells are responsible for the successful cure of a tick-borne infection may provide a target for treatment in all infected dogs
- Prevention is key for tick-borne disease; Strategies to improve tick control will improve the health of dogs and humans living in at-risk areas

Our Progress So Far

The AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) believes in the advancement of science to meet the unmet medical needs of the dogs that are such an important part of our daily lives. Here we list the important active studies in this research program area:

- 02831 Mechanisms of NK(T) Cell Mediated Inflammation during Canine Lyme Disease
- 02819 Identification of Bartonella henselae In Vivo Induced Antigens for Development of a Reliable Serodiagnostic Assay for Canine Bartonellosis
- 02553 Targeted next generation sequencing panel for comprehensive testing of vector-borne pathogens
- 02528 Developing a Next Generation Sequencing Diagnostic Platform for Tickborne Diseases
- 02519 Prevalence of Bartonella spp. Infection in Dogs with Cardiac and Splenic Hemangiosarcomas within and between Geographic Locations

Webinars:

- [Fleas, Ticks, What's the Difference?](#) Dr. Chris Adolph, DVM, MS, DACVM (Parasitology), Veterinary Specialist, CAD Veterinary Specialty Operations, Zoetis Animal Health
- [Tick Borne Infectious Diseases in North America: Clinical and Zoonotic Implications](#); Dr. Edward B. Breitschwerdt, DVM, DACVIM, Professor of Medicine and Infectious Diseases, College of Veterinary Medicine, NCSU

Podcast:

Dr. Diane Brown, CHF CEO, spoke with Pure Dog Talk in 2018 for this podcast on Researching Connections Between Ticks and Cancer. Listen to the podcast at <https://puredogtalk.com/researching-connections-between-ticks-and-cancer-other-disease-pure-dog-talk/>. ■



AKC Reunite Announces 3:1 Match for ‘Adopt a K-9 Cop’ Grant Program

AKC Reunite, the largest non-profit pet identification and recovery service provider in the United States, is pleased to announce new enhancements to its AKC Reunite Adopt a K-9 Cop matching grant program.

For the past several years, the program has allowed AKC Reunite to match funds from AKC Clubs, one-to-one, up to \$5,000 per grant through the Canine Support and Relief fund in order to purchase K-9 police dogs to donate to police departments throughout the United States. Starting immediately, the program will accept contributions from the public to help cover the club’s portion of the grant and AKC Reunite will now match donations at a three-to-one ratio, up to \$7,500 per grant.

“This partnership with local AKC clubs is a grassroots effort working across the country,” said AKC Reunite Chair Rita Biddle. “AKC Reunite is very pleased to increase our contributions to our Adopt a K-9 Cop program as the service of these dogs and their handlers is so important in the protection of our communities.”

“K-9 officers are such an incredible asset to law enforcement agencies in our nation,” said Christopher L. Sweetwood, Ambassador for AKC Reunite’s Adopt a K-9 Cop Matching Grant Program and Delegate for the Trap Falls Kennel Club. “Twenty-six police K-9s have been donated since the program’s inception, using over \$121,000 in grants, and these new improvements will allow us to make an even greater impact on police departments nationwide.”

“K-9 officers are such an incredible asset to law enforcement agencies in our nation.”

- Christopher L. Sweetwood ~ Ambassador for AKC Reunite’s Adopt a K-9 Cop Matching Grant Program

The AKC Reunite Adopt a K-9 Cop Matching Grant program was established to partner with AKC clubs and assist police departments in acquiring K-9 police dogs. Many law enforcement agencies do not have funds in their budget to obtain police K-9s, as they are considered a specialty unit. The donations allow the police departments to obtain a new K-9 for help with search and rescue, bomb detection, and overall public safety.

Learn more about how to get involved in AKC Reunite Adopt a K-9 Cop program and see pictures and stories of dogs already donated at <https://www.akcreunite.org/k9/>. ■



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