Your 2024 Election Guide

Election Day 2024 is Tuesday, November 5. This year, all 435 seats in the United States House of Representatives, 33 of the 100 seats in the Senate, and 36 governorships, and many other state and local elections will be contested.

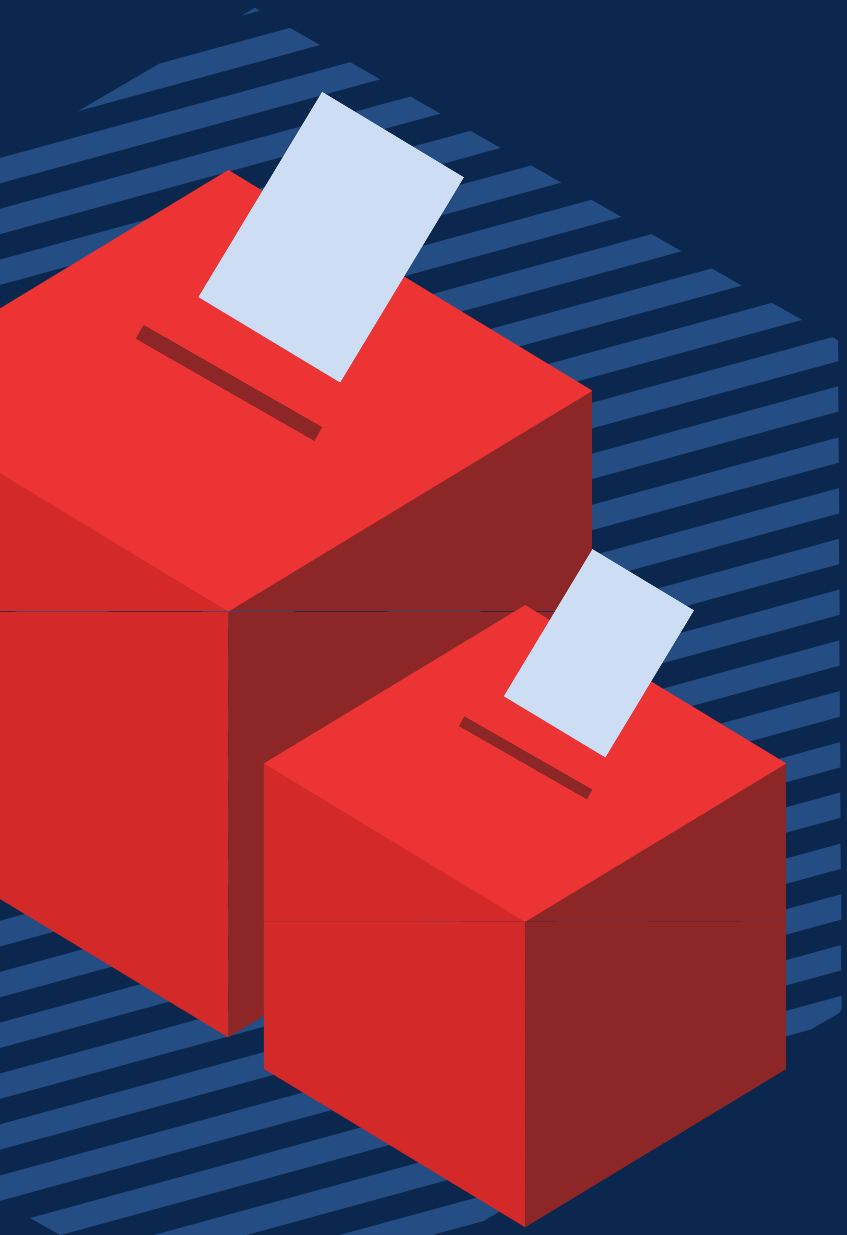
To preserve the future of purebred dogs, it's important to identify dog-friendly candidates and use your vote to elect those who will protect the rights of responsible dog owners, exhibitors and breeders. Here are four steps that every dog owner should take during the 2024 election cycle.

1.Become an educated voter – identify and support those candidates who respect your rights as a responsible dog owner.

2.Make sure your voter registration is up-to-date, and consider hosting a voter registration drive at an upcoming dog show or event. Contact your local Board of Elections for more information.

3.Find out where, when, and how to vote -- including absentee and early voting options. Check on current requirements for proof of identity. You can find this information by contacting your Secretary of State's office.

4.Mark your calendar for the upcoming elections, then get out and vote!



Election Day
November 5

Here are some ways to get involved this election season and ensure the election of dog-friendly candidates:

Research Incumbent Voting Records:

If candidates are incumbents, research their voting records on issues that impact dog owners. For federal and state office holders, you can find information about their actions during their most recent terms by visiting the AKC GR's Legislation Tracking page at www.akcgr.org. Click on your state and on "US Fed" (federal) to review the canine legislation issues AKC tracked this year. Click on individual bills to see who sponsored a measure and to view the votes that were cast in committees and on the floor of the legislature.

Visit AKC's Legislative Action Center at www.akcgr.org to view legislative alerts and key issues. You can also visit your state's legislative web site to research information on current and past bills. Most state web sites allow you to search for bills introduced in the past 3-5 years. Some county and city web sites provide current and archived meeting minutes that record the votes on local measures. If they do not, contact the city or county clerk's office to request the vote record for an issue of interest. These records are available to the public.

Learn more at www.akcgr.org

Research Candidate Endorsements:

A good way to learn about candidates is to research their endorsements. It can be helpful to see which special interest groups have endorsed or "rated" a candidate on animal issues. Check organizations that you agree with as well as those with whom you don't agree. Some candidates may also be endorsed by public officials. Consider whether these officials are dog-friendly. Many candidates publish endorsements on their personal or campaign web pages.

Ask the Candidates:

An effective way to find out a candidate's views is to ask him or her directly. This not only helps reveal candidates' opinions and attitudes on canine issues, but it also lets them know that these issues are important to you, the voter. Attend town hall meetings, public forums, debates, and other public events that allow voters to ask the candidates questions about issues important to them. You can find upcoming opportunities on websites hosted by the candidate's political party, if applicable, and on the candidate's website. Look for lists or calendars of upcoming events.

Here are some suggested questions:

• Do you support the right to breed dogs, as long as it is done in a responsible and safe manner?
• Do you support the right to keep dogs that are not spayed or neutered?
• Do you support the right to own the breed or mixed breed dog of one's choice?
• Do you support limiting the number of animals someone can own?
• Do you believe there is a pet overpopulation problem? If so, what do you believe is the cause of the problem and how would you resolve it?

Do not ask candidates their opinions about specific organizations, as they may not be aware of where various groups stand on dog issues. Rather, by asking them policy questions, you will get a much better idea of their positions. We also recommend that you always be respectful and do not engage in a public debate. Instead, follow up with their campaign office and ask if you can meet with the candidate or their staff to discuss canine legislation issues. ***Make sure to let them know that the candidate's positions on these issues will impact how you vote!***

If candidates are not familiar with the issues, evade your questions, or have not voted how you want in the past, view it as an opportunity to educate. Visit the AKC Government Relations Toolbox at www.akcgr.org for resources you can give candidates to help educate them about canine issues and the importance of supporting responsible dog ownership. Invite candidates to your next club meeting or dog show to talk about canine legislation issues.

Volunteer:

Get involved in campaigns that are important to you. Let your candidates know why you support them, and volunteer! Even if you have only limited time, taking a few hours to stuff envelopes, answer phones, or put up signs is a great way for candidates to see that responsible dog owners care about legislation and will support those who will protect our rights. Helping on the campaign is a wonderful way to establish a relationship with elected officials for when canine legislative issues arise.

Go Local:

Candidates for federal and state offices often get the most press, but don't forget your city and county elections. Local measures often have the greatest and most immediate impact on dog owners. Problematic ordinances such as breed restrictions, pet limits, mandatory spay/neuter, and other overreaching laws are often introduced and passed at county and city levels. Not only are these measures of immediate concern to responsible dog owners, but your local commissioner may someday run for state or federal office. Take time to learn their positions, educate them about yours, and serve as a reliable resource for accurate and sensible information about dog care, events, and breeding.

Are you a member of a political party? Does your party maintain a local office, hold scheduled meetings, host speakers, or organize community events? If so, attend meetings and get involved! This offers an excellent opportunity to get to know community leaders and policy makers outside the legislative arena.

Spread the Word:

Electing lawmakers who respect the rights of animal owners helps ensure that the concerns of dog owners are heard and understood when canine legislation is considered. If you identify a dog-friendly candidate for office, spread the word to other animal owners, your club's Legislative Liaison, and the AKC GR team.

The AKC Political Action Committee (AKC PAC) is a non-partisan single issue campaign fund dedicated to supporting the election of candidates for political office who take a stand in support of the rights of responsible dog owners. The AKC PAC accepts donations from individual members of AKC clubs. One hundred percent of donations go directly to the campaigns of candidates for elected office who share our commitment to preserving purebred dogs and defending these rights. Donations to the AKC PAC may not be earmarked for individual candidates, but the AKC PAC welcomes recommendations regarding candidates who are worthy of support. Supporting the PAC financially is one of the most effective things you can do to help ensure that the voice of responsible dog owners and breeders is heard by lawmakers. For more information, please contact AKCPAC@akc.org.