



Taking Command

February 2026

A publication of the AKC Government Relations Department



What's New in Government Relations

It's been a busy month for AKC Government Relations and our state federations, with 47 state legislatures and Congress in session – not to mention local governments throughout the country.

From New England to Hawaii, AKC GR has worked with state and local lawmakers, federations, club members and breeders to protect dogs and the rights of responsible owners and breeders. We strongly encourage you to take a look at the many legislative updates included in this issue to see what is going on in your region and how you can get involved.

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The articles below are a digest of blogs recently published by AKC Government Relations. To view all resources, please [click here](#).

AKC Lauds House Farm Bill's Priorities for Animal Welfare, and Protections for Dogs and Their Owners

On February 13, the U.S. House Agriculture Committee released its draft language for the 2026 Farm Bill - the *Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026*. This measure reauthorizes key U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs for five years and typically serves as a vehicle to address federal priorities in the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

The American Kennel Club Executive Secretary & VP Government Relations Sheila Goffe commented, "We appreciate the extraordinary effort and bi-partisan efforts of House Agriculture Chairman G.T. Thompson and his staff in presenting a bill that not only supports crucial U.S. Agricultural programs, but also supports important priorities for dog enthusiasts including canine health, welfare and the rights of responsible dog owners."

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AKC Welcomes Lawmakers at Record-Breaking Meet the Breeds Event in NYC

Last weekend, AKC Government Relations staff welcomed tri-state area (NY, NJ and CT) lawmakers to a record-breaking crowd at the Javits Center in New York City for the annual AKC Meet the Breeds event celebrating purebred dogs and responsible dog ownership.

For 15 years, AKC Meet the Breeds has been a great opportunity for lawmakers to see firsthand the overwhelming crowds who come out to see purebred dogs and to interact with constituent dog owners, enthusiasts, and breeders. This year, more than 65 state and local lawmakers signed on as Honorary Chairs for this event, and many came with their families and staff to enjoy the event and meet the dogs.

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AKC's Patriotic Puppy Program Deploys 200th Detection Dog Graduate

The American Kennel Club is excited to announce the deployment of the AKC's Patriotic Puppy Program (PPP)'s 200th graduate.

Tsunami is a black Labrador Retriever, bred and trained by Crystal Ernst of [American K9s](#) in Brown County, OH. Ernst has been an active participant in the AKC's Patriotic Puppy Program since 2023. As a participant in the AKC Patriotic Puppy Program, Ernst and other participants work hands-with AKC staff and industry experts to address the shortage of high-quality detection dogs by breeding and training purpose-bred AKC registered working canines.

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Improving Detection Dog Development Through Early Evaluation: Key Takeaways from Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (JHU/APL)

The AKC Detection Dog Task Force recently hosted a webinar featuring Megan Toms, DVM, MPH, and Jordan Johnson, PhD, MHS, of the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (JHU/APL). The presenters shared new insights from the Domestic Breeding Initiative (DBI), a collaborative, data-driven program dedicated to strengthening the U.S. supply of high-quality, domestically bred detection dogs. Their presentation highlighted how structured behavioral evaluations, long-term data collection, and close partnerships with breeders can support more informed decisions throughout a dog's early development—ultimately improving breeding practices, training pathways, and procurement outcomes for working canines.

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AKC, PA Federation Celebrate Purebred Dogs at PA Farm Show

Recently, AKC Government Relations participated in the Pennsylvania Farm Show, hosted by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Dog Law Advisory Board, the Pennsylvania Federation of Dog Clubs (PFDC), and local kennel clubs.

Among the many sights and sounds of the week-long event included an opportunity to celebrate purebred dogs, and AKC GR invited Pennsylvania legislators and staffers to join the over 2,000 attendees in coming to meet the dogs and enjoy demonstrations ranging from retrieving to agility to disc dog – including an agility demonstration by Montgomery Country 4-H highlighting youth participation in dog sports.

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Legislative Information and Updates

Linked below are some highlights of pending legislation impacting dog ownership and dog owners' rights across the country. For more information on these issues, and information on how you can get involved, visit the AKC GR Legislative Action Center [here](#).

Visit the [2026 Legislation Tracking map](#) for the most up-to-date information on state and federal legislation. This site, updated each week-day, provides the latest bill text, status, and links to legislative alerts posted by the AKC.

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 GR's Regulatory Resource Center](#) provides updates on federal and state regulatory issues that may impact dog owners.

Federal	State	Local	Regulatory
Issues that may affect all dog owners in the U.S.	Issues specific to your state	Issues at the city, county, and metropolitan levels, and in U.S. territories	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.



AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

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