



Office of
Representative Hannah E. Kane
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 26, 2024

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Representative Kane supports series of bills to protect animal welfare and safety

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury) recently supported a series of animal welfare bills designed to ensure the safety of dogs placed in kennels, prohibit the use of exotic animals in traveling acts, prevent the intentional misrepresentation of service animals, protect animals in foster homes, and require the licensure of veterinary technicians.

All five bills were engrossed by the House of Representatives on July 25 with Representative Kane's support. They will now move to the Senate for its consideration.

Representative Kane highlighted the bills that passed the House, which include:

- **House Bill 4919, An Act to increase kennel safety (aka Ollie's Law)** – This bill creates a committee to develop standards for the pet day care industry, including doggy day care centers. In addition to implementing guidelines for insurance coverage, staff-to-dog ratios, and requirements for housing and fire safety, Ollie's Law would also require that kennels be inspected at least once a year. The bill is named after a seven-month-old Labradoodle puppy who was severely injured by another dog at a doggy day care center in East Longmeadow and succumbed to his injuries two months later.
- **House Bill 4915, An Act relative to the use of elephants, big cats, primates, giraffes and bears in traveling exhibits** – This bill explicitly bans the use of exotic animals in traveling performances venues – including expositions, fairs and carnivals – where they are used to perform tricks, give rides, or otherwise participate as an accompaniment for the entertainment of a live audience. These animals are often subject to cruel and inhumane treatment, including prolonged periods of confinement and other forms of neglect and abuse, all to provide entertainment. Violations would carry a penalty of \$500-\$10,000 per animal. House Bill 4915 mirrors legislation that has passed in other states and local bans which several Massachusetts communities have also implemented.
- **House Bill 4917, An Act relative to a commission to study the intentional misrepresentation of a service animal** – This bill establishes a special legislative commission to study the use of service animals in the Commonwealth. The study's scope will include current law governing service animals, the benefits they provide to individuals with disabilities, and the prevalence and impact of fraud, misrepresentation and other misuse of service animals. The commission will also explore training and educational opportunities to increase the public's understanding of laws governing the use of service animals. The commission will file a report with its findings, along with any legislative recommendations, by April 1, 2025.

- **House Bill 4911, An Act relative to animal welfare and DCF regulations** – This bill would allow employees of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Health and Human Services, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to report animal abuse without having to tie it to an ongoing 51A report. It also would allow DCF to request the records of any pet or animal maintained on the premises of a foster home from a foster parent, including medical and vaccination records, and to consider a potential foster child's history regarding their behavior around animals. It also inserts language giving DCF the right to request “any information necessary” to determine the potential safety risks toward the child or animal from the foster parent. In addition, the bill prohibits DCF from basing its decision on child placement in a foster home on what breed of dog resides in the home.
- **House Bill 4912, An Act regulating the practice and licensure of veterinary technicians** – This bill would establish licensure requirements and regulation of veterinary technicians in Massachusetts through the state’s Board of Registration in Veterinary Medicine. The bill would also add three licensed veterinary technicians to the board, while also distinguishing between veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants.

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