



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.*

### Why the Puppy Protection Act fails to Protect all Puppies

Welcome to the first issue of 2022!

The American Kennel Club (AKC) is pleased that are many beneficial dog related bills up for consideration this year. Three bills that have clear-cut objectives that benefit dogs and use proven science to ensure that dogs (and those who love them) can stay safe and healthy, include:

- The "Healthy Dog Importation Act" (H.R. 4239/S. 2597), which requires dogs imported into the United State to have a valid health certificate from a veterinary authority recognized by the USDA, to be permanently identified, and fully vaccinated against rabies and other contagious diseases of concern.
- The "Pets Belong With Families Act" (HR 5828) seeks to end breed discrimination in public housing.
- The "Paws Off" Act (HR 5261), requires a warning on the label of food products that contain xylitol, a sugar alternative that is extremely toxic to dogs,

Unfortunately, the "Puppy Protection Act"

Continued on page 10

## INSIDE

Perspectives.....	1
Congressional Spotlight.....	1
Capitol Staff and Their Dogs.....	3
Policy.....	4
AKC News.....	6
Health.....	9

## CAPITOL CANINE SPOTLIGHT

### Congressman

# JOHN KATKO (NY-24)



Henry, Photos courtesy office of Congressman John Katko

Congressman John Katko grew up with dogs. One of his favorite childhood memories is a welcomed bark at his front door, after his English Springer Spaniel, Snooper disappeared. It was 10 o' clock pm , and Snooper had been missing for over a day. After wandering off his family's property, Snooper had been found by the local animal control and taken to the pound. The Congressman, just a boy at the time, and his sisters were devastated. There was never any real explanation for Snoopers mysterious arrival back at the front door that night, but Katko distinctly remembers having seen paw prints in sister's boyfriend's truck. Although the boyfriend never admitted it, the evidence was pretty incriminating that Snooper had received some help springing out of the pound!

Congressman Katko would go on to have many more memories with beloved family dogs throughout the years. From Murphy, a gregarious yellow lab

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Sadie

named after his favorite Irish Pub in Old Town Alexandria; to Sadie a beloved black lab, whom the Congressman was devastated to lose a couple years ago; to his current Lab, Henry.

After losing Sadie, the Katko family was heartbroken. So, when the Congressman's wife learned that one of her college friends had some AKC registered Labrador retriever puppies available, the family couldn't resist meeting them and they immediately fell in love. They named the adorable yellow lab, Henry, after his father-in-law's middle name. At the time, the Congressman's father-in-law's health was failing, and he was in an assisted living facility. He loved dogs, so the family would bring the friendly pup – who the Congressman says has never met a stranger – to visit the father-in-law and bring him some cheer.

“Henry is a huge part of our family – and our neighborhood,” remarks the Congressman. “He is such a great dog who loves following us around and playing catch. We have an electric fence, so when we are not outside with him, he sits at the end of the driveway with a ball in his mouth and waits for people to come by. As they approach, he will toss the ball in the road. Invariably, people stop, pick up the ball and throw it to him a few times. Even the U.S. Mail, Fed Ex and UPS drivers will stop and play catch!”

In true Labrador Retriever fashion, Henry is extremely active and likes to swim, play fetch, and go for rides in the car. Although Labs can be the perfect family dog, they need copious amounts of exercise to stay physically and mentally fit.

The Congressman loves taking his active dogs out into nature, where they seem to find unexpected surprises. Rep. Katko's previous yellow Lab, Murphy, was notorious for finding deer remains during hunting season. One day while the Congressman was sitting in his kitchen, he heard what sounded like a rock hitting the floor. When he looked up, he saw that Murphy had swallowed a whole deer hoof!



Henry

abuse, neglect, and dog fighting. All of which can be very harmful to dogs.”

“To help tackle some of the issues facing dogs,” he continues, “I introduced the bipartisan Help Extract Animals from Red Tape (HEART) Act, which expedites the disposition of animals seized in federal animal fighting and gambling cases. My bill will reduce the length of time animals are held in shelters so they can find a loving home, and ensure that individuals responsible for harm cover the cost of care, not taxpayers.”

And when things get ruff (dog pun intended) on the Hill, the Congressman looks forward to Henry cheering him up. In fact, Rep. Katko hopes that Henry will be able to join him in his D.C. office soon.

“We do not have any dogs in the office currently, but a while back one of my staffers had an adorable French Bulldog,” the Congressman explained. “If I knew I was going to have a tough meeting, I would have my staff open the door and ‘accidentally’ let Penny the pooch come in. She melted everyone's hearts and the meetings always got better. She was my secret charm offensive!”

Owning a dog is a rewarding experience that brings great joy and happiness to any household. With responsible dog ownership comes long-term emotional and financial commitment and a variety of responsibilities. To the Congressman, “responsible dog ownership means everything ... This can appear in many different forms, from a nutritious diet to lots of belly rubs. Mainly, to me, responsible pet ownership means ensuring your pet knows they're loved and cared for. As I've said, Henry is very much a part of the family, and his health and happiness matter a great deal to all of us.” ■

## Did You Know?

- The Labrador Retriever has been on the AKC's top 10 most popular breeds list for 30 consecutive years—longer than any other breed.
- Labrador Retriever is originally from the Canadian province of Newfoundland, not Labrador.
- The breed began its steady climb to supreme popularity in the early 1800s, when Labs were spotted by English nobles visiting Canada.

# Capitol Staff and Their Dogs

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 love these furry companions.

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



Abby owned by Caseworker, Lindsey Ward



Mickey Mantle Holahan owned by District Director, Tom Haag



Zelda owned by Press Assistant, Carrie Cole



# The American Kennel Club Requests Support for Important Canine Legislation

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the American Kennel Club (AKC), our more than 5,000 dog clubs, and millions of responsible dog owners and enthusiasts throughout America, I write you today to request your support for several bipartisan bills before Congress that promote responsible dog ownership and the health and well-being of all dogs. We respectfully encourage urge you to support and consider co-sponsoring the following legislation:

- **H.R. 4239/S. 2597 – The Healthy Dog Importation Act (HDIA)** – In 2019, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that up to [1.25 million dogs](#) are imported into the U.S. annually, compared to the 2006 estimate of [287,000 imported dogs](#). Many of these dogs enter the U.S. without valid health certificates – and many of them are carrying contagious zoonotic diseases. Exponential growth in the import of dogs from throughout the world and outdated health protection requirements have resulted in recent incidents of dogs with non-native parasites and zoonotic diseases such as rabies, viral infections, brucellosis, and other pathogens being passed into the general public.

The HDIA, introduced by Representatives Kurt Schrader and Dusty Johnson in the House and Senators Tina Smith and Chuck Grassley in the Senate, would require that all dogs entering the U.S. be permanently identified, in good health, and accompanied by a certificate of veterinary inspection, issued by a licensed veterinarian accredited by a competent veterinary authority recognized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The health certificate must certify that the dog has received all required vaccinations and demonstrated negative test results required by the USDA. Dogs entering the country for resale, transfer, or donation must be at least 6 months old and accompanied by a USDA import permit. Dogs entering the country used for research purposes or needing veterinary treatment are exempted.

The AKC recognizes the value of importing select, healthy dogs from overseas, freedom of choice in choosing a pet, and ensuring that people may travel with their pets with a minimum of disruption. However, at a time when we are fighting a global pandemic, we are also concerned about the increasing documented incidences of the importation of unhealthy random-source pets, particularly for transfer, where public and pet health may be inadequately protected. The Healthy Dog Importation Act would address these significant concerns by providing additional tools to USDA to prevent the import of unhealthy animals, while continuing to allow imports of healthy dogs.

- **H.R. 5828 – The Pets Belong with Families Act** – The Pets Belong with Families Act, introduced by Representatives Adam Schiff and Brian Fitzpatrick, amends the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437z–3) to prohibit public housing authorities from banning dogs and other animals from public housing based on their breed. AKC and many other leading animal organizations recognize the inherent fallacies in breed-specific approaches to concerns about dangerous dogs. More effective ways of protecting communities from dangerous dogs include increased public education efforts to promote responsible dog ownership principles; strict, uniform enforcement of animal control laws (such as leash laws); and breed-neutral guidelines that clearly define dangerous behavior based on stated, measurable actions for all breeds; establishing well defined methods for dealing with dogs proven to be dangerous; and imposing

appropriate penalties on irresponsible owners. Behavior and suitability for ownership should be based on a dog's actions, not its physical appearance.

- **H.R. 6353/S. 3447** – The National Service Animals Memorial Act – Sponsored by Representatives Susan Wild and Nancy Mace and Senators Blumenthal and Blackburn, the National Service Dog Memorial Act authorizes the creation of a memorial in the Greater Washington, D.C. area under the Commemorative Works Act to honor and recognize the contributions of service animals and their handlers to the public wellbeing, safety, and independence of Americans throughout our history. The cost of the memorial will be covered by private sector funding.
- **H.R. 5261 – The Paws Off Act** - The Paws Off Act, sponsored by Representative Dave Schweikert and Greg Stanton, requires that labels on food items containing Xylitol include a warning specifying the toxic effects of Xylitol on dogs if ingested. Xylitol or “birch sugar” is a chemical compound commonly used as a sugar substitute in chewing gum, dental products, peanut butter, baked goods, and other human food. Xylitol is harmful to dogs because, unlike humans, it is quickly absorbed in the bloodstream and may result in a sudden release of insulin from the pancreas. The rapid release of insulin into a dog's bloodstream may cause severe hypoglycemia and can quickly become life-threatening or fatal to dogs.
- **APHIS Animal Welfare Act (AWA) enforcement funding** – AKC strongly supports increased funding for AWA enforcement and inspections. AKC plans to support additional funding in FY 2023 to ensure that APHIS has the resources to adequately enforce all provisions of the AWA and to educate the public as to who should be licensed by USDA.

The American Kennel Club thanks the bill sponsors for their leadership in advancing legislation that recognizes the contribution of service animals and advances the health and well-being of all dogs. We respectfully request that you join AKC in supporting these important bills by signing on as a co-sponsor. Should you have questions about this legislation or other canine issues, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at [shg@akc.org](mailto:shg@akc.org) or phone, 919-816-3720; or AKC's federal representative, Mike Williams, at [mike@mikewilliams.com](mailto:mike@mikewilliams.com) or 703-963-0918.

Thank you for your consideration.



Sheila Goffe  
Vice President, Government Relations  
[shg@akc.org](mailto:shg@akc.org)



# Winners Named in 1st AKC/USPCA K9 Detection Dog Challenge

The American Kennel Club (AKC®) is excited to announce the winners of the first-ever AKC/USPCA K9 Detection Dog Challenge. The event, hosted by the AKC and the United States Police Canine Association, brought out the best of the nation’s narcotics and explosives detection dogs to demonstrate the important role dogs play in law enforcement and keeping our country safe. ESPN2 aired the event on November 28th.

“The AKC is proud to profile the great service that our K9 officers provide to our nation to help keep us safe,” said Chris Sweetwood, AKC Board Director. “As the Event Chairman for the Challenge, this was a labor of love for our four-footed first responders and their human partners. We are proud to recognize their professionalism.”

The event was held on November 15th at the PNC Arena, where ten

narcotics dog teams and ten explosives detection dog teams competed against each other to see which could find their respective substance – illegal narcotics and explosive substances – the quickest. The teams navigated obstacles and sorted through distractions to find the hidden items. They were scored on the accuracy of their search, perfection of their alert (telling the handler where the hide is), and the find itself (a combination of the ability of the dog and the handler to accurately tell judges where the hide is located).

“This event brought out the best of the best from around the country, and it was extremely impressive to watch these dogs in action,” said Gina DiNardo, AKC Executive Secretary. “We are happy to congratulate the winners and all of the participants and thank them for their diligent work in keeping our nation safe.”

## WINNERS



### Explosives Teams:

- 1st - Michelle Lyman and K9 Peppers, Raleigh Police Department
- 2nd- Tracy Stuart and K9 Freya, Stockton University Police in New Jersey
- 3rd- Kaitlyn Schamberger and K9 Zada, NYPD Transit
- 4th - Alison Gentile and K9 Mac, MTA PD NY
- 5th - Rich Rodden & K9 Kasey, GMC Security Global Police



### Narcotics Teams:

- 1st - Dao Meunseveng & K9 Bero, Des Moines Iowa Police
- 2nd- Joe Angarone & K9 Bela, Mercer County, NJ Prosecutors Office
- 3rd- Larry McArdle & K9 Zoey, New York Department of Corrections
- 4th- Kolby Kraft & K9 Kye, Charleston, IL Police Department
- 5th- Jared Davis & K9 Bella, Lowndes County, GA Sheriffs Department

To learn more about AKC events, visit [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org). To learn more about the USPCA, visit <https://www.uspcak9.com/>. ■

# American Kennel Club Expands its Pack in 2022



Mudi/Holly Hildreth, AKC Publications photo contest



Russian Toy/Wikimedia Commons

The American Kennel Club (AKC®) is pleased to announce that the Mudi and Russian Toy have received full recognition, and are eligible to compete in the Herding Group and Toy Group, respectively. These additions bring the number of AKC-recognized breeds to 199.

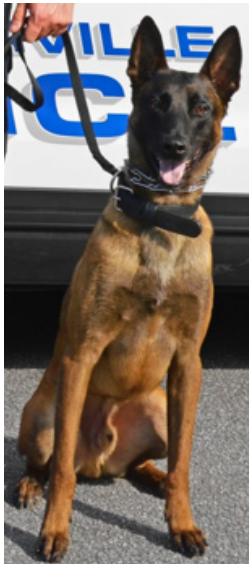
“We’re thrilled to have two unique breeds join the registry,” said Gina DiNardo, AKC Executive Secretary. “The Mudi, a medium-sized herding dog, makes a great pet for an active family committed to keeping this worker busy, and the small, loving Russian Toy thrives on being close to its humans, making a wonderful companion for an owner who can be with the dog a great deal. As always, we encourage people to do their research to find the right breed for their lifestyle.”

The Mudi joins the Herding Group, and is a medium-sized, versatile, all-purpose farm dog from Hungary. The breed is courageous and useful for working the most stubborn livestock. It’s loyal and protective of property and family members. Mudi are very energetic, enjoying a good run. They are playful, affectionate, and can be calm and relaxed at home. They don’t have many grooming requirements. Occasional baths and a combing or brushing will do.

Joining the Toy Group, the Russian Toy dates back to the Russian aristocracy. These dogs may be little, but they pack a ton of personality. They are elegant, lively, active and cheerful. They are intelligent with a strong desire to please. Russian Toys thrive on human companionship, loving to snuggle and be close to their family. They can, however, be slightly aloof with strangers. The breed has two coat types – longhaired and smooth. The long-haired coat should be brushed two to three times per week and given baths monthly. The smooth coat needs weekly brushing and occasional baths.

AKC Recognition offers the breed the opportunity to compete at all levels of AKC-sanctioned events. Recognition does not necessarily mean that the breed is a newly created breed. Many of the breeds that gain full AKC-recognition have existed for decades, and some are ancient. To become an AKC-recognized breed there must be an active following and interest in the breed by owners in the U.S. as well as an established breed club of responsible owners and breeders. There also must be a sufficient population of dogs in the United States geographically distributed throughout the country. Breeds working towards full recognition are recorded in AKC’s Foundation Stock Service® (FSS®). Additional information on the process can be found at [akc.org](http://akc.org).

# AKC Reunite Celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> K-9 Donated Through Adopt a K-9 Cop Matching Grant Program



AKC Reunite, the largest non-profit pet identification and recovery service provider in the United States, announced today that 100 grants have been donated to police departments throughout the nation through its **AKC Reunite Adopt a K-9 Cop** matching grant program. Funds were raised by contributions from AKC clubs and community members, with AKC Reunite matching donations at a three-to-one ratio.

The 100th Adopt a K-9 Cop grant was given to the Jackson County Sheriff's Office in Sylva, NC sponsored by The United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) with AKC Reunite matching the funds raised three-to-one. The USPCA has been a top participating sponsor in the program.

The Adopt a K-9 Cop program allows AKC Reunite to match funds from AKC Clubs, AKC affiliated organizations and the public, three-to-one, up to \$7,500 per grant through the Canine Support and Relief fund. These donations help police departments throughout the United States purchase K-9 police dogs. Many of the police dogs acquired with the help of these grants are used as patrol dogs as well as detection dogs, helping to locate narcotics, explosives and/or evidence.

"We are thrilled to have donated 100 grants through the AKC Reunite Adopt a K-9 Cop matching grant program," said Tom Sharp, AKC Reunite CEO. "K-9 police dogs are a vital asset to law enforcement agencies nationwide and these grants help local police departments acquire police dogs, contributing to increased safety in their communities."

"The United States Police Canine Association is excited to assist the AKC Reunite program, which helps provide funding for new and additional police canines to law enforcement across the country," added Don Slavik, Executive Director for the USPCA.

The most recent grants were donated to the following police departments:

STATE	POLICE DEPARTMENT(S)
California	Humboldt County Sheriff's Office
Colorado	Loveland Police Department (two grants)
Georgia	Jacksonville Police Department
Iowa	Decorah Police Department
Minnesota	Kanabec Police Department St. Cloud Police Department
Mississippi	Hattiesburg Public School District Police Department Jones County Sheriff's Department
North Carolina	Buncombe County Sheriff's Office and Currituck County Sheriff's Office Jackson County Sheriff's Office
North Dakota	Jamestown Police Department
Ohio	Jackson Center Police Department
Oklahoma	Locust Grove Police Department McClain County Sheriff's Office Okmulgee County Criminal Justice Authority Roland Police Department Salina Police Department Tulsa Oklahoma Police Department (three grants)
South Carolina	Greenville County Sheriff's Office



A total of 100 Adopt a K-9 Cop grants have been awarded since the inception of the program. 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/>.





# AKC Canine Health Foundation Celebrates \$3.4 Million in Canine Health Research Grants Awarded in 2021



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AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF), a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the health of all dogs, celebrates \$3.4 million in canine health research grants awarded in 2021.

Fifty grants were awarded to canine health researchers across the globe to explore more accurate diagnoses, develop new treatments, and further our understanding of canine disease. These studies explore more common conditions such as arthritis, pancreatitis, epilepsy, and tick-borne disease, as well as specific concerns such as Addison's disease in Portuguese Water Dogs and dermatomyositis in Collies and Shetland Sheepdogs. More than \$1.3 million in new [canine cancer research grants](#) were awarded to study lymphoma, melanoma, hemangiosarcoma, and more as cancer remains a top concern of dog owners and veterinary professionals.

CHF increased its commitment to One Health – a concept that recognizes the interconnected health of animals, humans, and our shared environments – with more than 40% of new funding supporting studies with [One Health significance](#).

The Foundation continued its dedication to the future of canine health by awarding three new [Clinician-Scientist Fellowships](#) and supporting two new residents through the [AKC/AKC-CCHF/TF Small Animal Theriogenology Residency Program](#). These grants ensure that researchers and trained specialists are available to meet the general and reproductive health needs of dogs for generations to come.

CHF also Earned another highest four-star Charity Navigator rating and GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency, demonstrating that it exceeds industry standards for fiscal responsibility, accountability, and transparency and outperforms most charities in its category.

“CHF-funded research has a direct impact on the health of current and future generations of the dogs we love,” says Andrea Fiumefreddo, MS, CHF Vice President of Programs & Operations. “Our 2021 investments and accomplishments are the result of years of planning and collaboration with respected researchers, breed clubs, and dog lovers. We look forward to continued progress in understanding canine health and disease.”

Thanks to outstanding donor support, CHF remains a leader in canine health research and is planning another strong year in 2022 working to prevent, treat and cure canine disease. Learn more about CHF's canine health research and educational grants at [www.akcchf.org/research](http://www.akcchf.org/research). ■



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(H.R. 2840/S. 1385), fails to demonstrate these same standards. Though well-intentioned, the Puppy Protection Act would establish new, arbitrary, one-size-fits-all requirements for USDA-licensed dog breeders that may not be in the best interests of the dogs they handle.

The American Kennel Club believes dog owners bear a special responsibility to their canine companions to provide proper care and humane treatment at all times. Proper care and humane treatment include an adequate and nutritious diet, clean water, safe and clean living and travel conditions, regular veterinary care, kind and responsive human companionship, and training in appropriate behavior. Dogs should not be kept in circumstances where these needs cannot be adequately fulfilled.

However, as a species, dogs are extraordinarily diverse, which means that that arbitrary one-size-fits-all standards don't always work as intended. Each breed of dog, and individual dogs for that matter, thrives in different types of care and living conditions directed towards their particular needs. Although well-intended, the "Puppy Protection Act" fails to address individual needs, and instead creates arbitrary mandates that can undermine best practices, and in some cases, be harmful to a dog.

While some portions of the act include reasonable generalized guidelines for canine care, *arbitrary requirements that ignore best practices for individual outcomes are never appropriate for federal mandates*. "One-size-fits-all" requirements do not take into account the broad range of breeds and types of dogs or best health and breeding practices. They also do not allow for innovative ap-

proaches that ensure breeders and owners provide optimal care for their individual dogs and advance the art and science of responsible dog breeding.

AKC supports and promotes responsible breeding practices through breeder education programs and commends those who offer similar guidance. We strongly oppose the breeding of dogs by those who do so without regard for the dogs' welfare.

The AKC supports **scrupulous enforcement** of the federal Animal Welfare Act, and state and local regulations governing the humane care of animals. Rather than creating new requirements, issues related to the care and wellbeing of professionally bred pets can be best addressed by first enforcing violations of the existing Animal Welfare Act or negligence or cruelty laws. AKC strongly supports providing additional resources to the USDA to ensure that existing regulations are fully enforced.

Thank you for your action to protect the future of our dogs and the integrity of responsible, expert breeders.

All the best,



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



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**AKC Government Relations Department**

(919) 816-3720 • [doglaw@akc.org](mailto:doglaw@akc.org)

[www.akcgr.org](http://www.akcgr.org)

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