



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.*

### Teachable Moments Matter

To err is human. But in just about any endeavor, minor errors or the opportunity to ask questions of an expert also provide a valuable opportunity to learn.

So-called "teachable moments" are typically related to experience and defined as the moment at which a person is most able to learn. They provide the opportunity for a person to improve outcomes, performance, or learn an important lesson that emphasizes positive overall outcomes over minor negatives or errors made on the path to success. The general principle of teachable moments is widely recognized in a variety of environments ranging from child rearing, to scientific research, education, and even to criminal justice.

Until recently, USDA's Animal Care Division of APHIS, which oversees implementation of federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) rules for professional breeding operations has provided programs and outreach to assist breeders on practical matters; assistance in improving welfare and operations; and in-person teachable moments to assist licensees in improving opera-

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## CAPITOL CANINE SPOTLIGHT

### Congressman

# SANFORD BISHOP (GA-2)



Photos courtesy office of Congressman Sanford Bishop

With Liberty and Justice for all!

Not only are these keystones of America's foundation, but for Congressman Sanford Bishop (GA-2), they have a special relevance. Liberty and Justice are the names of his American Kennel Club (AKC) registered Rottweilers. Influenced by his dog-loving wife, Rep. Bishop brought home Justice in 2016.

In 2019, the family realized Justice needed a friend. So, the Congressman and his family went back to the same breeder and got Liberty.

The names were chosen by the Congressman's granddaughter, who was inspired by her lessons in school, as well as by what she was seeing on the news. Although the dogs are best friends, their personalities could not be

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Photos courtesy office of Congressman Sanford Bishop

more different. Bishop describes Justice as “an alpha male, with a dominant, and sometimes persnickety, personality”. He is adventurous and loves to examine every inch of their nearby walking trail. Liberty, on the other hand, is extremely affectionate, loves to stay close to the family, and gives kisses whenever she can.

The two Rottweilers even had a litter of puppies, which went to the Congressman’s friends and his daughter, who named her prized Rottweiler, Blue II, after the family’s first Rottweiler (named “Blue”). Blue was a “huge love bug”, the Congressman says.

Rep. Bishop’s love for dogs doesn’t stop at home. He introduced the Beagle Brigade Act of 2022 (H.R. 8432), which provides permanent authorization for the National Detector Dog Training Center, located in Newnan, Georgia. The center provides extensive training to odor detection dogs and their U.S. Customs and Border Protection handlers to locate prohibited agricultural items at U.S. borders that could carry foreign plant pests or animal diseases into United States.

Permanent authorization for the USDA’s National Detector Dog Training Center in Georgia provides the U.S. with a crucial tool in our effort to protect against foreign pests and diseases that have the potential to devastate all sectors of the agriculture economy.

Detection dogs also play an important role in our national security. However, fewer than 15% of detection dogs are acquired from breeders domestically. The AKC has established a [Detection Dog Task Force](#) to combat over-reliance on foreign-sourced dogs being placed as government working dogs (GWD). The group provides analysis of the GWD industry and provides recommendations to improve the sourcing of U.S.-bred and trained dogs, including working more closely with the AKC and other stakeholders. Legislation, such as the Beagle Brigade Act, is a step forward in ensuring the United States has an adequate number of detection dogs avail-

able for the security of our nation.

In addition to legislation, Rep. Bishop has participated in many events on Capitol Hill commemorating dogs. The Congressman was recently involved with an event hosted by the non-profit, “Angels Without Wings”, and their [Animals in War & Peace Medal of Bravery](#). Two of the award winners were explosive detection dogs who were posthumously awarded this prestigious honor: “Stormy,” a German Shepherd Dog who served in the Vietnam War with his handler, Ron Aiello, and “Lucca,” a Belgian Malinois mix, who served in the Marine Corps for six years, and in her retirement, served an ambassador to the military working dog community. Acknowledging the work of these incredible working dogs is important, because according to the Congressman, “it is a real blessing to have animals that are trained to help us out in [this] way. [Dogs] are really, truly man’s best friend.”

In addition to protecting the ability to raise and train detection dogs in the United States, Rep. Bishop is passionate about working to end dog fighting. As Chairman of House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, he advocates for additional enforcement dollars for the USDA’s and Animal Welfare Act (AWA). This funding will help federal oversight of kennels and ensure the USDA is able to provide important educational and enforcement functions. The American Kennel Club thanks Representative Bishop for his commitment to ensure that APHIS has sufficient funding to carry out their mandate and work with licensees to improve the overall wellbeing of animals subject to USDA licensing. ■



## Did You Know?

- The Rottweiler is one of the descendants of Roman drover dogs
- The aloof demeanor these world-class guardians present to outsiders belies the playfulness, and downright silliness, that endear them to their loved ones.
- Rottweilers love swimming, walking, and trotting, especially with their people.
- Rottweilers excel in many canine sports, and the breed works with a human partner in many functional roles.
- Between 1901 and 1907, the Rottweiler found favor as a police dog.

October 4, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
United States Senate  
Committee on Appropriations  
Room S-128 - The Capitol  
Washington DC, 20150

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
United States Senate  
Committee on Appropriations  
304 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairman  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
2413 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
1026 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Concerns regarding Sec. 755 of the FY 2023 – House Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill**

Dear Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Shelby, Chairman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger,

We, the undersigned organizations are troubled by recent attempts by the House of Representatives to prohibit collaboration and education between USDA and the regulated community. This would break the connection that drives continuous improvement in our shared commitment to animal welfare.

The House’s FY23 Agriculture Appropriation reduces APHIS to enforcement only, mandating an end to education and collaborative approaches to ensuring animal welfare, particularly eliminating teachable moments. The House language is overly broad, contrary to the best interests of the animals in our care, and useless to increasing compliance with the Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

Specifically, Sec. 755 of the House bill would prohibit funding to pay for salaries or expenses of personnel to implement any activities related to:

- (a) The permitting of non-recording of observed violations of the AWA or its regulations on official inspection reports; or
- (b) The prioritizing of education or collaborative approaches to violations or noncompliance ahead of enforcement under the AWA.

The House language appears to prevent inspectors from working with licensees to improve the condition of their facilities or treatment of the animals before enforcement, which raises a couple of important questions. Should the House language be interpreted to mean an inspector is prohibited from suggesting changes? Preventing inspectors from conveying questions and concerns or educating regulated entities would undoubtedly be detrimental to the health and well-being of the animals.

With a prohibition on “education” and “collaborative approaches,” how would the agency promulgate and implement new regulations, a process that typically involves a 60-day public comment period under the Administrative Procedures Act? Education is a critical part of the regulatory process. For example, USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has been working with licensees and registrants to help them understand and comply with the newly promulgated contingency plan regulations. The House language could be interpreted as prohibiting that kind of

training. It could also be interpreted as prohibiting agency staff from even participating in any kind of meeting with the regulated community.

To offer another example, as part of APHIS's new licensing regulations, the agency has encouraged licensees to request a visit before the formal pre-license inspection. This is something the agency has found to be constructive as part of their effort to ensure compliance with AWA regulations; however, it would be prohibited under this new House language.

The Animal Welfare Act gives the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to implement such inspections and investigations as necessary to enforce the Act (§ 2146, a.). Through this authority, the USDA prioritizes enforcement of critical and direct non-compliance that is related to the care and wellbeing of animals. This authority also allows USDA inspectors and staff to provide additional guidance (teachable moments) to regulated entities whose operations may benefit from additional recommendations and education. Although this initiative has fostered a collaborative environment in which the inspectors work with licensees to improve standards of care, the House appropriations language prohibits this positive relationship, and further appears to be in direct conflict with the Secretary's authority as established by the Act.

Properly implemented, teachable moments do not interfere with enforcement of direct violations of animal care requirements, but in fact complement it and help both parties achieve better and more efficient compliance with the AWA. As of this writing, teachable moments are inventoried by APHIS and are publicly available in a searchable database at <https://aphis-efile.force.com/PublicSearchTool/s/teachable-moments>.

The use of teachable moments exemplifies an open and collegial communication between the regulator and the regulated community which is necessary to achieve the mutual interest of compliance. It is worth noting that teachable moments have been applied to areas of regulation that have no direct impact on animal welfare, calling into question the motivation behind the House language.

The regulated community and the USDA both seek the same outcome: the highest level of animal welfare possible. Prohibiting teachable moments as a constructive tool sends the wrong message to regulated entities who care deeply for the welfare of their animals and who strive daily for nothing less than full compliance. The USDA has long requested self-reporting as part of its enforcement process. However, the House language suggests an enforcement scheme that is dangerously close to prosecution without due process. It is not difficult to imagine that if this approach prevails, the regulated community will likely interpret USDA enforcement as purely punitive, which would in turn undermine any future incentive to self-report noncompliance irrespective of its significance. Prioritizing enforcement actions over all other approaches to ensure animal welfare is short-sighted.

We respectfully request the committees express their support for collaboration and education between USDA and regulated entities, as well as the use of teachable moments which are constructive tools used by the agency to promote education, collaboration, and most importantly animal welfare.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks & Aquariums

American Veterinary Medical Association

American Humane

American Kennel Club

Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

International Marine Animal Trainer's Association

National Animal Interest Alliance

National Association of Biomedical Research

Protect the Harvest

Sportsmen's Alliance

Pet Advocacy Network

Zoological Association of America

cc: Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees





## The American Kennel Club Receives Leashes Of Leadership Award

The American Kennel Club (AKC®) received the ‘Leashes of Leadership Award’ from the Association of Service Dog Providers for Military Veterans (ASDPMV) on July 20, 2022 at the National Service Dogs for Veterans Conference held in San Antonio, TX.

“We are thrilled to see our Association members honor Shelia Goffe and American Kennel Club with the Leashes of Leadership award for outstanding business partner. This award is given in recognition for the many years of partnership with the Association in serving our veterans. Their partnership has made an important difference in savings lives,” said Jeremiah Blocker, Executive Director of the Association.

The ASDPMV is a coalition of non-profit service dog providers for military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury and military sexual trauma working together to prevent suicide

and improve military veterans’ mental health. The organization’s goal is to ensure that qualified organizations pair veterans with the most beneficial service dogs; increase awareness and understanding of the medical evidence that supports the use of service dogs; and advocate for the expanded use of service dogs.

“AKC has been pleased to work with the association since its inception in raising awareness of the benefits that properly trained service dogs can bring to military veterans suffering both visible and invisible disabilities. We are proud to work together in development of the [Service Dog Pass](#) and look forward to working together for many years in the future,” said Sheila Goffe, AKC Vice President, Government Relations.”

For more information on the Service Dog Pass, please click [here](#). ■

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## AKC Reunite Awards 200th Grant for Adopt a K-9 Cop Program



AKC Reunite, the largest non-profit pet microchip identification and recovery service provider in the United States, has announced that it has given its 200th grant through its [AKC Reunite Adopt a K-9 Cop](#) matching grant program, totaling \$1.4 million in donations.

“AKC Reunite is honored to be able to provide these grants at a time when police K-9s are so valued and necessary,” said Tom Sharp, President & CEO of AKC Reunite. “We thank the departments and handlers who partner with the dogs to keep our communities safe.”

The 200th Adopt A K-9 Cop grant was awarded to the Pickens Police Department in Pickens, South Carolina.

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. Funds are raised by contributions from AKC dog clubs and community members. 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.

The Pickens Police Department grant was sponsored by the Clemson Kennel Club.

A total of 200 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 Study: Hunting for Answers About Lyme Disease



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Lyme disease is the most well-known and most studied tick-borne infection in dogs and humans. Caused by infection with the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*, Lyme disease is most common in the Northeast United States but there is a risk of infection throughout North America. Co-infections, infection with more than one disease-causing organism, are common in dogs and humans. This makes Lyme disease, and tick-borne diseases in general, a great example of the need for One Health research. Collaboration between veterinary and human medical researchers means that what we learn about infection and disease in one species can also benefit the other. The high prevalence of clinical Lyme disease and the need for better treatment and prevention strategies in dogs and humans are what motivated AKC Canine Health Foundation funded investigator Dr. Christine Petersen to hunt for answers about this tick-borne infection. They are also why English Springer Spaniel breeder and trainer Mark Haglin encouraged English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association (ESSFTA) members to participate in Lyme disease research. According to Mr. Haglin, “The potential for learning more on how to prevent our dogs from getting Lyme disease and learning new treatment options was critical because we all have had dogs that have suffered from this disease.” From 2019 to 2021, Dr. Petersen performed physical exams and collected clinical histories and blood samples from dogs participating in ESSFTA field trials in the upper Midwest. The dogs and their owners had traveled from all over the United States and Canada, allowing data collection from dogs living and traveling in areas with high or low risk of tick-borne disease. The data is being analyzed by Dr. Petersen and her team to determine why some dogs infected with *B. burgdorferi* have no ill effects, while others experience severe clinical signs including fever, swollen/painful joints, and even life-threatening kidney disease. These different clinical responses are thought to be caused by interactions between the bacteria and each dog’s immune system.

Dr. Petersen’s preliminary research found increased levels of a specific type of immune cell in dogs with subclinical Lyme dis-

ease – those that were infected but not overtly ill. The increased immune cells were natural killer T-like cells (or NKT-like cells), which can kill infected cells and make chemical signals that modify the immune response. Research continues to explore exactly how these NKT-like cells interact with *B. burgdorferi*. A better understanding of what these cells do to prevent clinical illness may help us alter the inflammatory molecules produced after infection and ultimately alter the course of disease in dogs, and potentially humans. “Almost 100% of the dogs and owners who attended these field trials participated in the research study,” says Mr. Haglin. “Dr. Petersen and her team were just awesome to work with and interacted with the owners of the dogs and collected samples, gathered the data, and were very open to sharing the results and learning about each dog from each owner.” He continues, “One of the biggest reasons for our support of this research project is the potential for this to carry over to the human side of Lyme disease. We all know people who have been affected by Lyme disease in debilitating ways because of misdiagnosis or lack of early treatment. So, we figured any research on canine Lyme disease was going to be great to possibly help with treatment in humans.” Dr. Petersen and her team enjoyed meeting the field trial dogs and owners who were eager and happy to participate in this research, despite the occasional cold and wet conditions. “This research does not happen without dog owners that are willing to participate,” she says. “In addition to the blood sample, we need to know the clinical history of each dog. We need the follow-up to know the full patient story.” The AKC Canine Health Foundation and its donors are proud to collaborate with investigators like Dr. Petersen and dedicated dog owners like Mr. Haglin and ESSFTA members to tackle tough questions about Lyme disease and other tickborne diseases. Working together, we can find, fund, and complete the quality studies needed to develop better treatment and prevention strategies for dogs and their owners. Learn more about CHF’s tick-borne disease research, including how you can participate, at [akcchf.org/ticks](https://akcchf.org/ticks). ■

tions that improve compliance and positively impact canine welfare.

At a time when U.S. demand for puppies far outstrips supply (the US Pet Productions Association estimates demand above 8 million puppies per year), teachable moments and educational opportunities are more important than ever. For new or future pet breeder licensees, there are few resources other than the American Kennel Club and USDA to learn the science and art of canine breeding and animal husbandry in a hands-on environment.

But now there are efforts by some groups to end this. These groups typically have little animal breeding or husbandry experience and often misinterpret education or teachable moments as undermining welfare: The fact is, educational and outreach programs do the very opposite. Implementation of educational programs and teachable moments has enabled 96% of USDA pet breeder licensees to achieve compliance with AWA regulations.

Specifically, Section 755 of the FY 2023 Agricultural Appropriations bill, recently passed by the U.S. House contains language that would prohibit funding to implement any activities related to: (a) The permitting of non-recording of observed violations of the AWA or its regulations on official inspection reports; or (b) The prioritizing of education or collaborative approaches to violations or non-compliance ahead of enforcement under the AWA.

This raises important concerns:

- Should the House language be interpreted to mean an inspector is prohibited from suggesting changes? Preventing inspectors from conveying questions and concerns or educating regulated entities would be detrimental to the health and well-being of regulated animals.
- With a prohibition on “education” and “collaborative approaches,” how would the agency promulgate and implement new regulations, a process that typically involves a 60-day public comment period under the Administrative Procedures Act?
- Education is a critical part of the regulatory process. Currently, APHIS works with licensees and registrants to help them understand and comply with the newly promulgated contingency plan regulations. The new House language could be interpreted as prohibiting that kind of training. It could also be interpreted as prohibiting agency staff from even participating in any kind of meeting with the regulated community.
- As part of APHIS’s new licensing regulations, the agency has

encouraged licensees to request a visit before the formal pre-license inspection. This is something the agency has found to be constructive as part of their effort to ensure compliance with AWA regulations; however, this too would likely be prohibited under this proposal.

Cutting funds to key educational and outreach programs and emphasizing enforcement would create a sea change in how USDA works with dog breeders. It would move the current emphasis of collaborative relationships in support of ethical, high-quality practices through outreach and education, to a “gotcha” scheme that fails to forestall preventable welfare failures and would allow for avoidable harm to dogs in order to implement harsh penalties later on.

In a letter dated October 4, numerous organizations joined with the American Kennel Club to urge Senate Appropriators to not reduce educational opportunities as done in the House bill, but instead to provide additional funding for inspectors and to promote education, collaboration and animal welfare. Organizations joining this letter include the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, the National Animal Interest Alliance, the National Association of Biomedical Research, the Pet Advocacy Network, Sportsmen’s Alliance, and others.

Passage of such legislation will further send the message that Americans don’t care about ethical breeding or support animal welfare. At a time when the demand for pets is stronger than ever; fewer U.S.-bred pets means more will be imported from countries with few if any animal welfare and health requirements.

To learn more, visit [AKC’s Legislative Action Center](#), [AKC’s Alert](#) or view joint letter (pg 3-4).

All the best,



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