



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB<sup>SM</sup>

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March 15, 2021

The Honorable Gary Winfield  
The Honorable Steve Strafstrom  
Chairmen, Joint Committee on Judiciary  
300 Capitol Avenue Room 2500  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591

**RE: American Kennel Club Supports HB 5125 COVID-19 Liability Protection.**

Dear Chairmen Winfield and Strafstrom, and Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary:

Founded in 1884 as a not-for-profit organization, the American Kennel Club (AKC) is a recognized and trusted expert in canine health, breeding, and training. We represent over 5,000 dog clubs nationally, including 57 in Connecticut, which represent thousands of dog owners.

HB 5125 would provide certain liability protections to entities, including non-profits, when there has been exposure to the COVID-19 virus. This protection may be of potential interest to some AKC-affiliated clubs with concerns about conducting their events while under a higher-than-normal exposure to liability risks. Last year, in an effort to ensure the safety of exhibitors and animals, AKC provided our local clubs with extensive procedures to be used in conjunction with U.S. Centers for Disease Control and state guidelines to follow when hosting events and shows. The ability for local clubs to host events is crucial, as they generally rely on competitor entry fees as their primary source of revenue. However, due to concerns that a competitor or volunteer's exposure to COVID-19 may leave them financially responsible for such exposure, local non-profit dog clubs were unable to host events throughout much of last year. For these reasons, we support HB 5125, and encourage its passage.

In 2019, AKC licensed and sanctioned 219 events in the state of Connecticut, in which more than 24,000 dogs participated. The AKC conducts ongoing research regarding the economic impact of AKC events in localities throughout the state, as well as of AKC registered dogs in the state. Surveys demonstrate that exhibitors at AKC conformation dog shows spend an average of \$685 per show weekend. This means that spending by AKC dog show exhibitors for a show weekend could inject more than \$1.7 million into the local economy. And because AKC dog shows are an educational and family-friendly event, large spectator gates can generate additional revenues for cities and towns statewide. More information on the benefits of dog shows and other AKC dog events can be viewed here:

*The Economic Benefits of AKC Dog Shows*  
*It Pays to Support AKC Dog Shows*  
*Conformation Shows: More than Just a Pretty Face*

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me at (919) 816-3348 or [Stacey.Ober@akc.org](mailto:Stacey.Ober@akc.org).

Sincerely,

Founded in 1884; a not-for-profit corporation

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CC: Laurie Maulucci, President, Connecticut Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners (CFDRDO)