

Hello, Representative Graham. I wanted to follow up on your question on required training for humane agents in Vermont since I wasn't sure if I satisfactorily answered your question during the committee hearing on H. 567 on Wednesday.

Attached is the law that the legislature passed in 2021 with regard to training for humane agents, and here is a link to the statutory reference in Title 20:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/20/151/02365b>

As I mentioned during my testimony, anyone who graduates from the full- or part-time police academy already gets 4 hours of training in animal cruelty investigations. Law enforcement officers are also able to take the class as part of their POST basic requirement for continuing education units.

In the 2021 law that passed, the Vermont Animal Cruelty Investigations Advisory Board was tasked with recommending and providing a training curriculum for humane agents from private shelters and municipal animal control officers, with a deadline of December 2023 for them to take the course. Since the Advisory Board did not make that deadline, there's some question about where that leaves these private humane agents who have not yet had the training. Language in the amended version of H. 626 makes it clear that only law enforcement officers and animal control officers who work for law enforcement agencies have authority as humane agents. If H. 626 doesn't pass, I'm not sure where that leaves us other than in a state of limbo for private humane agents. We may need additional legislative action or an opinion from the Attorney General's office.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions. Thank you.

Joanne Bourbeau

Northeastern Regional Director/State Affairs

Pronouns: she/her