

Nate Biscotti

From: Martin LaLonde
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2026 4:01 PM
To: Nate Biscotti
Subject: Fw: [External] Vermont House Bill 578

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Representative, Chittenden 12, South Burlington, VT
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Chair, House Ethics Panel
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From: Cindy Pratt <ckp.dvm@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2026 2:18 PM
To: Martin LaLonde <MLaLonde@leg.state.vt.us>; Zachary Harvey <zharvey@leg.state.vt.us>; Nate Biscotti <Nate.Biscotti@vtleg.gov>; Thomas Oliver <TOliver@leg.state.vt.us>; Kenneth Goslant <KGoslant@leg.state.vt.us>; Barbara Rachelson <BRachelson@leg.state.vt.us>; Tom Burditt <TBurditt@leg.state.vt.us>; Angela Arsenault <angela.arsenault@vtleg.gov>; Ian Goodnow <igoodnow@leg.state.vt.us>; Karen N. Dolan <KNDolan@leg.state.vt.us>; Kevin Christie <KChristie@leg.state.vt.us>; Alicia Malay <amalay@leg.state.vt.us>
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[External]

Amendment Needed to Protect Artificial Insemination Practices

As a Vermont Veterinarian that works with many dog breeders and also some cat breeders, it is important to get the wording correct for this bill to protect legitimate artificial insemination practices. The proposal must specify **human** semen to protect responsible animal husbandry and breeding methods. I provide advanced reproductive services for canines but the method for semen collection and traditional artificial insemination is often done by lay people (breeders). Those people need to be protected since these procedures are not animal cruelty but legitimate procedures.

Costs of Care Language Will Result in Due Process Violations

H.578 would require, rather than allow, courts to permanently forfeit animals (except livestock) from anyone convicted of animal cruelty and to prohibit them from owning animals for at least five years instead of for a length of time determined by the court. This removes judicial discretion needed to account for mitigating factors, such as mental health conditions like animal hoarding disorder. Studies show that failure to address underlying mental health issues results in 100% of animal hoarders repeating their problematic behaviors.

H.578 also mandates that owners reimburse care costs for seized animals without consideration of financial ability, leading to automatic forfeiture if payments are not made. AKC (the largest dog registry in the USA) believes that dog owners must not be permanently or unreasonably deprived of their property interests without first pleading guilty to, being found guilty of, or pleading "no contest" to, animal-related criminal charges. To address these concerns, AKC recommends that courts

continue to be provided flexibility in sentencing and allowed to consider a person's ability to pay before assessing care costs.

Thank you for your consideration,
Dr Cindy Pratt

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