

Nate Biscotti

From: Martin LaLonde
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2026 3:58 PM
To: Nate Biscotti
Subject: Fw: [External] Fwd: Vermont: Cruelty Bill May Impact Artificial Insemination Practices, Lead to Due Process Violations—Express Opposition Today!

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Representative, Chittenden 12, South Burlington, VT
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Chair, House Ethics Panel
martinlalondevt.com

From: SM_VT <houndsinvt@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2026 3:11 PM
To: Martin LaLonde <MLaLonde@leg.state.vt.us>; Kevin Christie <KChristie@leg.state.vt.us>; Tom Burditt <TBurditt@leg.state.vt.us>; Nate Biscotti <Nate.Biscotti@vtleg.gov>
Subject: [External] Fwd: Vermont: Cruelty Bill May Impact Artificial Insemination Practices, Lead to Due Process Violations—Express Opposition Today!

[External]

Greetings to all,

As an owner of pruebred dogs for many years, I share the concerns listed below in the email I received from the AKC. I currently have frozen semen stored at a veterinary clinic that specializes in reproductive care and the wording of the current proposed legislation jeopardizes the future use of that semen via artificial insemination. It would do the same for many reputable breeders in Vermont who may rely on frozen semen from a dog that has since past to carry on their lineage or supply frozen semen to another breeder under agreement.

Additionally, while I agree that animal neglect and abuse must be addressed with harsher punishment to deter repeat offenders, I also believe the courts should retain some authority over the length and costs the defendant ought to incur based on mental health, living circumstances, and genuine desire to make amends. However, repeat offenders ought to be held to a stricter rule of accountability and should pay the expenses incurred to care for any rescued animals to include, but not limited to: rescue transport, vet care, feeding, and housing.

It might be prudent to reach out for public comment via the local news stations and

social media before finalizing a bill to move out of committee.

Thanks you for considering my comments.

Respectfully,
Sherry Mayo
Clarendon, VT 05759

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **AKC Government Relations** <doglaw@akc.org>

Date: Wed, Jan 28, 2026 at 10:46 AM

Subject: Vermont: Cruelty Bill May Impact Artificial Insemination Practices, Lead to Due Process Violations—Express Opposition Today!

To: Sherry Mayo <houndsinvt@gmail.com>



AMERICAN KEN GOVERNMENT RELATION

<https://www.akc.org/legislative-alerts/vermont-cruelty-bill-may-impact-artificial-insemination-practices-lead-to-due-process-violations-express-opposition-today/>

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

[Vermont House Bill 578](#) is a multi-faceted animal cruelty bill that, as introduced, may impact artificial insemination practices and create a significant risk of depriving residents of their property. *The American Kennel Club (AKC) opposes H.578 as introduced, and urges all Vermont residents to contact legislative committee members to not advance H.578 unless substantively amended. See talking points below.*

Amendment Needed to Protect Artificial Insemination Practices

H.578 would expand Vermont's definition of "sexual conduct" with animals to include (1) touching or fondling an animal's sex organs or anus, unless for a *bona fide* veterinary or animal husbandry purpose; and (2) the intentional transfer of semen onto an animal. The AKC takes no issue with the first addition, as it protects animal husbandry practices. However, the vague wording of the second proposed addition could unintentionally criminalize artificial insemination, a legitimate responsible breeding practice. AKC believes the proposal must specify "human semen" to protect responsible animal husbandry and breeding methods.

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 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.

[Click here to read H.578 in its entirety.](#)

What You Can Do

H.578 is scheduled to be considered by the Vermont House Judiciary Committee tomorrow, Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 9AM. Vermont residents are strongly encouraged to email the committee members to oppose H.578 as introduced, and to request the bill be amended to address unintended impacts on artificial insemination husbandry practices and to prevent unconstitutional due process violations prior to further consideration.

State Rep. Martin LaLonde, Chair - mlalonde@leg.state.vt.us

State Rep. Thomas Burditt, Vice Chair - tburditt@leg.state.vt.us

State Rep. Kevin “Coach” Christie, Ranking Member - kchristie@leg.state.vt.us

State Rep. Angela Arsenault - aarsenault@leg.state.vt.us

State Rep. Karen Dolan - kndolan@leg.state.vt.us

State Rep. Ian Goodnow - igoodnow@leg.state.vt.us

State Rep. Kenneth Goslant, Clerk - kgoslant@leg.state.vt.us

State Rep. Zachary Harvey - zharvey@leg.state.vt.us

State Rep. Alicia Malay - amalay@leg.state.vt.us

State Rep. Thomas Oliver - toliver@leg.state.vt.us

State Rep. Barbara Rachelson - brachelson@leg.state.vt.us

Nate Biscotti, Committee Assistant - Nate.Biscotti@vtleg.gov

For More Information

Contact AKC Government Relations at doglaw@akc.org.



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