



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.*

Enhanced Requirements for Imports Protects Pet & Public Health

Americans love dogs. As a nation, we own approximately 80 million and acquire another 8 million each year. Our dogs aren't "just pets", they are cherished family members.

Pets should be a source of joy – not of danger. But what many people don't realize is a new danger associated with pets that are misleadingly labelled as rescues. Unscrupulous distributors often take advantage of Americans' well-known love for dogs and their empathy for an underdog. As a result, the United States has become a magnet for foreign "puppy mill", street dogs, and other randomly-sourced dogs that can be carrying dangerous parasites and serious disease, but avoid regulation due to lax health standards for imports loopholes for pets marketed as "rescue" animals.

How did we get here?

Historically, rescue groups were run by committed breeders, kennel clubs or other experts who carefully vetted a small number of dogs that came into their possession and matched them with appropriate homes. Given the relatively small number of animals affected, sources of "rescue" pets have never been subject to the same kind of federal or state regulation or consumer protection laws required for purpose-bred dogs.

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CONGRESSIONAL CANINE SPOTLIGHT

Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy



Photo by Bill Clark

Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy (FL-7) and her staff in the Longworth House Office Building fondly recall the familiar saying, "if you want a friend in Washington, get a dog."

Fortunately for Representative Murphy, a 10-month-old Goldendoodle named "Carmela" belonging to one of her staffers, fits that bill. The rambunctious pup, affectionately nicknamed "the Chief Morale Officer", helps reduce stress in the office, greets constituents, and consistently brightens peoples' days. Carmela knows how to open doors, so sometimes she chooses which meetings she wants to be part of. According to the Congresswoman, it always a welcome surprise when Carmela walks into a meeting. "She's usually greeted with outbursts of joy from whomever is in the room," Rep. Murphy proudly exclaims.

Murphy, whose district includes downtown Orlando, Maitland, Winter Park, and the University of Central Florida, has owned dogs all her life. Her first dog, Bailey, was a much-loved Chesapeake Bay Retriever and Chocolate Lab mix. Rep. Murphy notes that Bailey had epilepsy and they spent much of his life helping manage his quality of life with a variety of canine medications to treat his condition. "He left an indelible mark in everybody's life that he was a part of, and my family misses him to this day," Rep. Murphy fondly explains.

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In recent years, the “adopt don’t shop movement”, has marketed the desirability of “rescue” dogs while promoting laws that under-mine local hobby breeders and regulated professional breeders. Currently, rescues are a favored venue to acquire a family pet – in 2016 some 44 percent of dog owners adopted their pet from a shelter, rescue, humane society or public adoption event.

The simultaneous reduction in supply and increased demand for pets has made the import of of random-source dogs labelled as “rescue” pets a big business.

Make no mistake -- rescues can be a good choice for pet owners willing to do their homework, but the bottom line is that there’s a risk with selecting a pet designated as a “rescue.” It’s hard to know if a rescue dog was legitimately in need of re-homing, bred for the retail rescue market or a random-source foreign animal imported en masse. And without records on origin and health, chances increase it could have serious temperament issues and be carrying serious diseases.

Part of the problem surrounds the validity of health records for imported dogs. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, health certificates required for entry into the US are often invalid or forged. Additionally, dogs from other countries are not subject to the health and welfare laws of professionally-bred U.S. dogs and may arrive carrying serious and infectious canine diseases. (See p.4 for more information)

It’s not surprising that in conjunction with a surge in dog imports, the United States has experienced an increase in instances of dogs with rabies -- including the canine variant that had previously been thought eradicated here -- canine flu, screwworm, brucellosis and a variety of other infectious diseases directly related to irresponsibly imported pets.

The grave dangers to public, pet and livestock health posed by irresponsible importation of pets into the U.S. should not be underestimated.

AKC is grateful to the lead-

ership of Sens. David Perdue, Bob Casey and Congressmen Neil Dunn and Vicky Hartzler for bringing this issue to the attention of Congress, and to the three veterinarians in Congress, Representatives Ralph Abraham, Kurt Schader, and Ted Yoho for supporting language in the Farm bill that requires the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide an estimate of the number of dogs annually imported into the country, along with an estimate of how many of them lack proper health paperwork.

The language in the Farm Bill provides a good start to understand the breadth of the dog importation danger, but more needs to be done to protect public health and to bring health standards for import into the U.S. into parity with other nations. We urge Congress to enhance these efforts in conference or future legislation as follows:

- Strengthen efforts to ensure that all dogs imported into the United States are fully immunized, free of infection, parasites and contagious diseases.
- All dogs for import into the US should be individually certified as such by a qualified veterinarian.
- No pet should be imported without an individual examination, valid veterinary certificate, and documentation regarding the source of the dog and the party responsible for it upon arrival into the United States.
- Regulators at the state and federal levels should boost direct oversight of rescues and shelters, and other retail/transfer locations where these animals are headed.

To learn more about this issue read the full issue analysis on page ___ or contact us at doglaw@akc.org or 919-816-3720.

All the best,



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CONGRESSWOMAN STEPHANIE MURPHY,

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Representative Murphy recalls one memorable instance days after one of Bailey’s seizures, when Bailey’s legs were especially weak. “I took Bailey to a dog park and let him play around in the park’s watering hole, but he started drowning, so I had to dive in to rescue him,” she explained. Fortunately, she managed to pull him out, but she remembers receiving a number of strange looks from two-legged parkgoers since she was soaking wet and covered in mud from head to toe. However, as she proclaims, she “had her dog by her side and that’s what mattered.”

Currently, the Congresswoman owns an AKC registered Chocolate Labrador Retriever named Kona. Rep. Murphy and her husband lived in Hawaii for a short time while she worked for the U.S. Department of Defense, and their pup’s coat reminded them of the color of Kona, a coffee cultivated on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Kona is a key member of the Congresswoman’s family and loves playing with her 4-year-old daughter and 7-year-old son. Labs love the water and Kona is no exception. He loves spending time at the pool with her family. Murphy also noted that, “being a Lab, some of Kona’s favorite activities include breakfast and dinner.”

Rep. Murphy is a lifelong dog lover and considers responsible dog ownership to be of the utmost importance. “I strongly believe owners must care for their dog in a kind, humane way, and to ensure it lives a happy, healthy life.” ■

Did You Know?

- For the 27th year in a row, the Labrador Retriever was named America’s most popular breed in 2017.
- The Lab’s thick, tapering tail—known as an “otter tail”—serves as a powerful rudder, constantly moving back and forth as the dog swims and aids the dog in turning.
- The Labrador Retriever did not come from Labrador, but from Newfoundland.
- Goldendoodles are mixed breed dogs made up of Golden Retriever and Poodle. Mixed breeds are welcome to participate in all AKC events, with the exception of breed specific competitions.

OUR NATION'S SECURITY RELIES ON PUREBRED WORKING DOGS.



So why are we
importing
nearly 90%
of our detection
and security dogs
from overseas?

AKC Stands with Members of Congress, TSA, and law enforcement to support and develop American breeders and trainers, expand America's world-class breeding and training programs, and establish a U.S.-based Center of Excellence for purebred security and detection dogs.





Issue Analysis: Rescue Dogs and Stopping a Potential Danger



Americans love dogs. As a nation, we own approximately 80 million and acquire another 8 million each year.

Anyone who has stared into the beseeching eyes of a pup who wants nothing more than to pass time on a welcoming lap or have her ears gently scratched knows that these are far more than cherished pets. They are family members.

Regardless of origin, they should be a source of joy – not of danger. But what many people don't realize is a new danger associated with pets that are misleadingly labeled as rescues. Unscrupulous distributors take advantage of Americans' wellknown love for dogs, and their empathy for an underdog. As a result, the United States has become a dumping ground for foreign "puppy mill" and "rescue" dogs, importing an estimated one million dogs annually from Turkey, several countries in the Middle East, and as far away as China and Korea, according to the National Animal Interest Alliance.

Rescues are a favored venue to acquire a family pet – in 2016 some 44 percent of dog owners adopted their pet from a shelter, rescue, humane society, or public adoption event.

Historically, rescue groups were run by committed breeders, kennel clubs or other experts who carefully vetted a small number of dogs that came into their possession and matched them with appropriate homes. But with the popularity of the "adopt don't

shop movement", the sale of large numbers of random-source dogs deceptively labeled as "rescue pets" has become a big business.

While rescues can still be a good choice for pet owners willing to do their homework, the bottom line is that there's a risk with selecting a pet designated as a "rescue." It's hard to know if a rescue dog was legitimately in need of re-homing, bred for the retail rescue market or a random-source foreign animal imported en masse. And without records on origin and health, chances increase it could have serious temperament issues and be carrying serious diseases.

Part of the problem surrounds the validity of health records for imported dogs. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, health certificates required for entry into the US are **often invalid or forged**.¹ What's more, dogs from other countries are not subject to the health and welfare laws of professionally-bred U.S. dogs and may arrive **carrying serious and infectious canine diseases**.²

Other necessities such as leashes were purchased for owners, so they can keep their pets right next to them while walking throughout the facility.

It's not surprising that in conjunction with a surge in dog imports, the United States has experienced an increase in instances of dogs with rabies -- including the canine variant that had previously been thought eradicated here -- canine flu,



screwworm, brucellosis, and a variety of other infectious diseases directly related to irresponsibly imported pets.

The dynamic of importing potentially sick animals and exposing others is compounded by risky measures at the state level that restrict consumers to choosing dogs identified as "rescues" or from random sources. For example, so-called puppy mill legislation passed in 2017 in California eliminates the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits sourced from regulated professional breeders in pet shops throughout the

state. Instead, pet stores are forced to sell only those animals obtained through shelters or rescues. A similar law recently went into effect in Maryland.

Limiting the sale of pets from regulated professionals in favor of rescues creates

a perverse demand and incentive to import greater numbers of street dogs and dogs of unknown origins for U.S. pet suppliers.

The importation of sick dogs now has the attention of U.S. lawmakers, with the government taking the initial steps to slow their importation.

House and Senate panels recently approved measures requiring the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide an estimate of the number of dogs annually imported into the country, along with an estimate of how many of them lack proper health paperwork. The proposals were added to the farm bill, which is currently moving through conference.

The congressional proposals are a good start to understand the breadth of the dog importation danger, but more needs to be done to protect public health.

What other actions are necessary?

- The government must strengthen efforts to ensure that all dogs imported into the United States are fully immunized, free of infection, parasites and contagious diseases.
- They should be individually certified as such by a qualified veterinarian.
- No pet should be imported without an individual examination, valid veterinary certificate, and documentation

regarding the source of the dog and the party responsible for it upon arrival into the United States.

- Perhaps most importantly, regulators at the state and federal levels should boost direct oversight of rescues and shelters.

“Limiting the sale of pets from regulated professionals in favor of so-called rescues creates a perverse demand and incentive to import greater numbers of....dogs of unknown origins for US pet suppliers.”

Don't be fooled. Retail rescues comprise a large industry whose marketing emphasizes the feel-good aspect of choosing a dog from an unknown situation. This is in sharp contrast to more traditional approaches of acquiring a dog from a reputable breed rescue or a breeder that emphasizes known background, breed characteristics and purposeful breeding programs with valid paperwork attesting to the animal's health.

“Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole,” said wildlife photographer Roger Caras.”

That sincere sentiment goes for a purposefully-bred and raised Labrador Retriever, German Shepherd or Pug as much as it does a rescue animal. Consumers should have the choice.■

AKC US Detection Dog Conference 2018

Tuesday August 28 – Thursday August 30, 2018
Sheraton Imperial Hotel Raleigh-Durham Airport at Research Triangle Park
Durham, NC



The 2018 AKC US Detection Dog Conference provides a forum for discussion of solutions to the domestic shortage of dogs available for explosives detection work.

The American Kennel Club formed a task force two years ago to explore how the AKC and AKC breeders might help with the increasing demand for qualified dogs to do this important work.

The 2018 conference will offer talks by experts in the field on topics of importance to breeders, trainers, vendors, law enforcement officers and more, as well as networking opportunities. To learn more, visit: www.akc.org/akc-detection-dog-task-force/akc-detection-dog-conference-2018/

AKC Pet Disaster Relief rolls out help for pets in Batavia

Batavia, OH is now equipped with an AKC Pet Disaster Relief trailer that will be available to dispatch to any disaster scene that needs assistance sheltering pets. Flooding is the most frequently occurring natural disaster in Ohio. Also, a portion of the state is in the tornado alley. In 2017, there were 39 confirmed tornados in Ohio.

AKC Pet Disaster Relief, a national program that is dedicated to keeping pets and their owners safe in response to natural or civil disasters, joined forces with local American Kennel Club dog clubs and dog lovers to present an emergency trailer to the Tri-State County Animal Response Team (CART).

AKC Pet Disaster Relief trailers help to create a safe, temporary home-base for at least 65 pets immediately after a disaster is declared. The trailers house and deliver essential supplies such as fans, lighting and generators; cleaning supplies; maintenance items; and animal care items including crates and carries, AKC Reunite microchips and an AKC Reunite universal microchip scanner as well as bowls, collars and leashes. These supplies can be used as co-location shelters, where people can evacuate with their pets, as well as emergency animal shelters for displaced animals.

"This is the 67th AKC Pet Disaster Relief Trailer donated through this incredible program. The trailer will provide critically important resources to help the Tri-State CART quickly care for its citizens and their pets when responding to natural disasters," said Tom Sharp, AKC Reunite CEO. "Safe, effective pet sheltering solutions are crucial during an emergency evacuation or immediately after a disaster, and AKC Reunite is pleased to offer this trailer as a vital tool to assist this organization if disaster strikes."



The purchase of the trailer was made possible by donations from the Clermont County Kennel Club, the Dog Judges Association of America, Warren County Kennel Club of Ohio, the Northern Kentucky Kennel Club, the Queen City Dog Training Club, the Gordon Setter Club of America, the Doberman Pinscher Club of America, the Greater Cincinnati Golden Retriever Club, the Brixey & Meyer Community Outreach Foundation and AKC Reunite, the nation's largest non-profit pet identification and recovery service.

Other donors include: the English Setter Club of Ohio, the Greater Cincinnati Weimaraner Club, the Cincinnati Shetland Sheepdog Club, the Peach Grove Animal Hospital and the Veterinary Dermatology.

"We cannot express our gratitude to AKC Reunite and the AKC dog clubs involved for providing us with such a significant resource for our community," said Bonnie Morrison, President of the Tri-State CART. "Now our team is better prepared to help people and their pets during times of disaster".

"Our Association is honored to be a part of the group helping to prepare the Tri-State CART for a disaster by bringing them an invaluable tool like the AKC Pet Disaster Relief Trailer," said Marjorie Underwood, Delegate of the Clermont County Kennel Club.

Individuals, corporations and other interested parties can donate to trailer projects in local areas or across the country. Donations are tax deductible and accepted online. Approved organizations that raise a minimum of \$1,000 will have their logo featured on the AKC Pet Disaster Relief trailer.

Learn more about how to get involved online with AKC Pet Disaster Relief or contact us at 919-816-3980 and relief@akcreunite.org. ■

The American Kennel Club Awards Two Noble Canine Heroes with 2018 Paw of Courage

The American Kennel Club (AKC®), the world's largest purebred dog registry and leading advocate for dogs, is proud to announce the recipients of the second set of **2018 AKC Paw of CourageSM** awards to show appreciation for the working canines that put their lives on the line every day to keep our communities safe. This award specifically recognizes those who are serving or have served their departments honorably and have demonstrated heroism in the line of duty.

"The impact that these two heroic dogs have made in their communities exhibits the highest level of loyalty and commitment," said AKC Executive Secretary Gina DiNardo. "They have improved the lives of many and their heroism deserves to be recognized. The **2018 AKC Paw of Courage** awards give us an opportunity to pay tribute to the sacrifices that these valiant canines have made in the line of duty."

Any working dog is eligible to receive an **AKC Paw of Courage**; the award is not specific to purebred dogs. To nominate a dog for the next set of **Paw of Courage** awards, [click here](#). Recipients of the award, or their human partner, will receive a 2018 AKC Paw of Courage medal along with a certificate. In addition, the recipients will receive a photo and profile on www.akc.org.

The second set of **2018 AKC Paw of Courage** award recipients are:



K9 Dexter of *San Diego Police Department, CA*

K9 Dexter, a three-year-old Belgian Malinois, has been with the San Diego Police Department for over a year. He is a multi-purpose police dog, serving the community with his handler, Officer Dave Winans. K9 Dexter and Winans are one of 36 K9 teams that the San Diego Police Department fields in order to help supply the city with 24/7 monitoring. Dexter is an invaluable resource to the department, successfully helping to deescalate volatile and dangerous incidents. Dexter and Winans have countless arrests under their belts and have contributed to a fair share of the 15,000 radio calls that the unit handled last year.

This past February, Dexter was viciously stabbed while responding to a 911 call. It was reported that a mother was struggling to control her son at home. The suspect came to the door of

the home yielding a kitchen knife and refused to drop his weapon, leading to an hour-long standoff with police. The officers on scene fired beanbag rounds at the suspect, which failed to disarm him. Officer Winans made the difficult decision to release Dexter and during the apprehension, the suspect stabbed him several times. K9 Dexter suffered a broken rib and ruptured spleen



and was rushed to the emergency veterinary facility for surgery. The suspect was successfully detained by the responding officers and arrested on multiple accounts, including felony assault of a police dog. K9 Dexter has since made a full recovery and returned to duty in San Diego. The sacrifice that K9 Dexter made to protect his fellow officers and his community is appreciated by the entire San Diego Police Department.

K9 Rony of *Houston Police Department, TX*

K9 Rony, an eight-year-old Belgian Malinois, served with the Houston Police Department for seven years at the time of his injury. He was certified in patrol work as well as explosive detection. K9 Rony was credited with 250 apprehensions and eleven gun or evidence finds throughout his career. He also served at several public events including the NBA Allstar Game, The Final Four, Superbowl, and recently the World Series.

In February, K9 Rony suffered a serious injury following a pursuit of a suspect who had been driving a stolen vehicle. The driver led officers on a vehicle chase before exiting the car and fleeing on foot. K9 Rony and his human partner, Officer Dennis Shadden, pursued the suspect on foot and Rony was released for an apprehension in a heavily wooded area. One of Rony's legs became entwined in an object and he suffered a serious injury. The subject was taken into custody by other officers and Rony was rushed to an emergency veterinary hospital for treatment. The injury had caused Rony a shattered elbow and multiple breaks in different places of his leg. Because of prior injuries and bad arthritis in his other legs, the veterinarian and the officers agreed that amputating the leg would be too traumatic for the K9 officer, and euthanasia was the most humane treatment. K9 Rony touched the hearts of many in his seven years with the department and will not be forgotten. ■



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