

ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE of BOSTON



*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Legislators Pass PAWS II Bill as Formal Session Ends

Enacted during informal sessions today

As formal legislative sessions late Tuesday night at the Massachusetts State House spilled into Wednesday morning, An Act to Protect Animal Welfare and Safety in Cities and Towns (PAWS II) was passed by both branches unanimously; and was enacted during informal sessions Thursday morning. PAWS II is now on its way to Governor Charlie Baker for consideration.

Governor Baker now has 10 days to review the measure and ARL urges the leader of the Commonwealth to sign PAWS II into law.

This legislation is an enormous step forward for animal protection law in Massachusetts and includes the following provisions:

- Establishes a commission to explore mandatory reporting of animal cruelty (ARL will have a designated representative)
- Ensures property owners check vacant properties for abandoned animals
- Prohibits the automatic euthanasia of animal fighting victims
- Ensures more efficient enforcement of animal control laws
- Prohibits sexual contact with an animal
- Prohibits the drowning of animals
- Requires insurance companies offering homeowners or renters insurance to record and report circumstances surrounding dog-related incident claims to the MA Division of Insurance, the clerks in the Senate and House, and the ways and means committees for three years (last report to be filed by Jan 1, 2022)

“This legislation is a huge leap forward for animal protection in Massachusetts and was several years in the making,” said ARL President Mary Nee. “The Animal Rescue League of Boston is thrilled with its passage and appreciate the hard work and dedication of our elected officials to make the welfare of animals throughout the Commonwealth a priority.”

PAWS II builds upon the original PAWS Act that was passed in 2014 and was born out of the horrific discovery of the dog forever known as Puppy Doe in 2013. Along with increasing animal cruelty penalties and requiring veterinarians to report suspected abuse, the PAWS Act created the Animal Cruelty and Protection Task Force. ARL President Mary Nee was part of the 11-member group who was charged with investigating the effectiveness of existing laws, and determining where gaps still exist.

The PAWS II Act is a direct reflection of the Task Force’s hard work and recommendations.

ARL worked in collaboration with the Humane Society of the United States, MSPCA, and Best Friends Animal Society to educate the public and advocate for the passage of this bill and would sincerely like to thank the following legislators for their leadership and commitment to animal protection:

PAWS II Sponsors: Senator Mark Montigny; Senator Bruce Tarr; Representative Louis Kafka
Conference Committee: Representative Jim O’Day; Representative David Muradian,

Representative Sarah Peake; Senator Tarr; Senator Montigny; Senator Adam Hinds

MA House: Representative Robert DeLeo (House Speaker); Representative Jeffery Sanchez
(House Ways and Means Chair)

MA Senate: Senator Karen Spilka (Senate President); Senator Harriette Chandler (Former Senate President)

ABOUT THE ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF BOSTON:

The Animal Rescue League of Boston (ARL) is an unwavering champion for animals in need, committed to keeping them safe and healthy in habitats and homes. Founded in 1899, ARL provides high quality veterinary care, adoption, and rescue services; while also confronting the root causes of animal cruelty and neglect through innovative community programs, police investigations, and public advocacy. In 2017, ARL served more than 18,000 animals throughout Massachusetts. ARL is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. We receive no government grants or public funding and rely solely on the generosity of individuals to support programs and services that help animals in need.

For more information please visit us online at www.arlboston.org; and be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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