



IN SESSION

AKC'S CONGRESSIONAL NEWSLETTER

The American Kennel Club's Newsletter for Members of Congress and their Staff

PERSPECTIVES

Understanding the Difference between Animal Rights and Animal Welfare

In last November's election, we saw a fair amount of misuse of the term "animal rights" and even outright support for "animal rights" by candidates that otherwise seemed to support the human-animal connection, kindness to animals, and proper care of animals based on sound science.

Policymakers know *semantics matter*. We urge every policymaker and their advisers to take the time to acquaint themselves with the difference between *animal rights* and *animal welfare*. For responsible policy, and the future wellbeing of animals, this distinction is simply too important to get wrong. Consider the following:

Animal Rights posits that humans should not use or own animals in any way, even as companions, and seeks to ultimately make that grim agenda a reality. For animal rights groups, the ultimate goal is not to improve the wellbeing of animals, but to stop breeding and human interaction with animals. Animal rights groups typically utilize media and legislation to incrementally change perceptions about the human use of animals, and to advance the goal of ending animal use and ownership.

The most radical animal rights groups advocate violence to achieve this goal. The federal government recognizes such activities as animal terrorism. The federal Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA) (18 U.S.C ss.43), outlaws activities for the purpose of damaging or interfering with the operations of an animal enterprise (including educational, agricultural, breeding, and other activities) and cause damage or loss of real or personal

Continued on next page

INSIDE

Congressman Jim Bridenstine	1
AKC Reunite	3
AKC Canine Health Foundation.....	5

Congressional Canine Spotlight – Oliver and the Office of Congressman Jim Bridenstine (OK-1)

When you go to Capitol Hill, you expect to have meetings and to exchange business cards. If you stop by the Office of Congressman Jim Bridenstine, you may receive one for "Oliver – Spaniel and Statesman". These cards (not paid for at taxpayer expense) have a photo of the office's official "Legislative Therapy Dog" – a friendly Cocker Spaniel named Oliver, who has been a regular in the office since the Congressman took office in 2013.

Oliver, who belongs to Communications Director Sheryl Kaufman, "gets more photo requests than the Congressman," she explained. "The photo business cards are necessary because Oliver often gets too excited and interested in his visitors to sit still for a photo op."

Oliver takes his job very seriously, says Kaufman. Once he has greeted everyone he often chooses to join them in the meeting. "However," she clarifies, "if he is in the Congressman's office and hears anyone else coming into the outer office, he politely scratches at the door to ask to go out and greet the new visitors."

Oliver can boast as being the only member of the Oklahoma Congressman's Washington, DC office to have actually been born in the state. Oliver, whose parents were both AKC-registered Cocker Spaniels, was born on a farm near Sapulpa, Oklahoma, in August 2007. "When I went to see the litter," his owner explained, "...I immediately fell in love with Oliver. The 8-year-old son of the farmer said, 'He's the one everyone picks up first.'"

Nine years later, Oliver still has many adoring fans. "I never thought I'd be a receptionist for a dog..." the Congressman's office manager once said. "I just had to ask someone to come back later because Oliver was in a meeting!"

Visitors to Bridenstine's office love meeting Oliver, and find him to be a calming influence to the sometimes overwhelming experience of going to Capitol Hill. This is true from constituents to dignitaries. One time, a foreign ambassador came to the office. "As soon as the ambassador went into the Congressman's office," Kaufman related, "one very imposing attaché in full dress uniform sat on the floor and played with Oliver, saying 'I had a cocker spaniel as a child.'"

Cocker Spaniels currently rank 30th on the AKC's list of the most popular breeds in the United States, and Kaufmann has learned that many visitors fondly remember a cocker spaniel they have known. "Everyone wants to talk about a dog they have loved," said Kaufman. "Recently a Congressman stopped me and asked me to take a photo of him and Oliver so he could send it to his mom who lost her Cocker a couple of years ago."

Continued on next page



©Office of Congressman Jim Bridenstine. Used with permission

"Oli just generates a lot of sweetness and light in a place sorely lacking both."

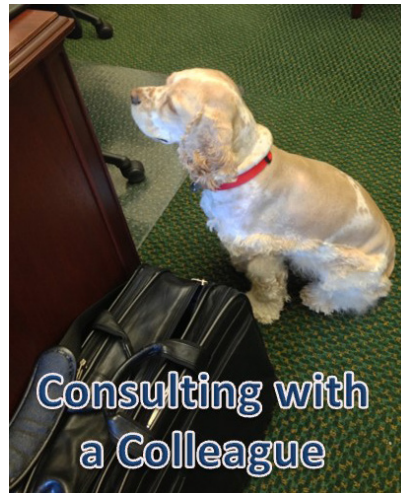
He is also much-loved among Bridenstine's staff. According to Kaufman, "everyone shares [their lunch with Oliver] and when one person tells him 'last bite,' he moves on to the next [desk]."

Besides his human friends, Oliver also enjoys visiting his canine friends Patches ("who is really shy and works down the hall") and Mazie ("who is a little loud and works around the corner"). He also loves it when Charlie, owned by Bridenstine's Legislative Director, comes to visit the office.

One of Oliver's favorite nightly rituals is running down one of the big marble halls in the Cannon Office Building before going home to expend some of that energy for which Cocker Spaniels are known. Oliver is also a member of the Congressional Cemetery, a very old cemetery near Capitol Hill where dog owners pay an annual fee that allows their dogs to walk and play off-leash.

Congressman Bridenstine's office recognizes the benefits of having a dog in the office. "As soon as the Congressman's wife learned that dogs were welcome in the House [of Representatives]," Kaufman said, "she decided that Oliver just had to be a part of the DC office team."

Bridenstine's office also believes that dogs in the office can actually help stimulate the economy. "Many people who take their dogs to work are in small businesses," noted Kaufman. "Interestingly that is where



the most economic growth occurs." Economic growth is an issue of great importance to the Congressman, and his office believes that this benefits his constituents as well as their dogs. He is concerned that "desperate, worried people" are those that may have more of a tendency to abuse animals. She said that the Congressman (and Oliver) believe the country "needs economic prosperity – and more dog treats!"

Oliver is an ambassador for responsible dog ownership and demonstrates how a well-loved dog can benefit not just the dog but the people around him. Wherever he goes on the Hill, Oliver brightens the day of visitors and staff. As his owner affectionately summarized, "Oli just generates a lot of sweetness and light in a place sorely lacking both."

Did You Know?

The Cocker Spaniel was one of the first breeds recognized by the AKC (1878) and has remained a popular breed. In 2015, the Cocker Spaniel was the 30th most popular breed in the United States.

According to the American Spaniel Club, it is believed that one of the first spaniels in the United States came over on the *Mayflower* in 1620.

property, or places a person in reasonable fear of injury.

Animal Welfare, is pro-animal ownership. It recognizes the human-animal bond, recognizes the value of quality animal care and purposeful breeding, and supports advancing science to ensure the health and wellbeing of animals.

Animal Welfare supports the practical and legal concept of animal ownership. In practice, we love animals, share our lives with them, and want to provide the best possible care for them. Legally, as "owners" of animals we are responsible for their care and we have the right to make appropriate care decisions for them.

Reasonable laws recognize that wellbeing of an animal is not tied to the number of animals a person has, but rather the quality of conditions and care provided. There are excellent owners of kennels of 100; and substandard owners of a single dog.

It's common for animal rights activists in the U.S. to advocate for closing down U.S. dog breeders and instead the sourcing of pets from random or unknown sources (often mislabeled as "rescues" or rescue distributors). The AKC strongly supports responsible rescue, and recognizes the appeal of assisting dogs from unknown origins, particularly overseas.

However, putting regulated U.S. breeders out of business in favor of animals from undocumented sources with unknown health and temperament histories has the potential to create enormous public health risks, reduce overall oversight of canine health and welfare, weaken consumer protections available for purpose-bred dogs, and undermine breeders who provide purpose-bred dogs that play an unparalleled role in protecting national security from threats at home and overseas.

At the American Kennel Club, we love all dogs. AKC is dedicated to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all dogs and to preserving each unique breed. Breeds of dogs, each developed for a purpose, reflect the cultures and peoples who developed them and serve as a testament to our ongoing relationship. Our beautiful purebred dogs are constant reminder of the special connection between humans and their dogs — a relationship that predates recorded history—and shows that by working together, even across species, we all benefit.

As the 115th Congress convenes, we urge you to support *animal welfare* and honor responsible dog owners and breeders through initiatives such as the National Purebred Dog Day resolution.

We look forward to working with you in the coming year. As always, the American Kennel Club is pleased to be your expert resource on dogs and canine policy. Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can be of assistance in any way.

All the best,

Sheila Goffe
Vice President, Government Relations



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

AKC Government Relations Department
(919) 816-3720 • doglaw@akc.com
www.akc.com/government-relations



AKC Reunite Earmarks an Additional \$200,000 for Pet Disaster Relief



AKC Reunite, the nation's largest non-profit pet microchip and recovery service company, has announced that it will infuse \$200,000 more in funds to complement money raised by AKC clubs throughout the country for the AKC Pet Disaster Relief program. AKC Reunite and AKC clubs have raised over \$1,000,000 dollars and donated 52 pet disaster relief equipment trailers to first responders around the country. Each trailer has crates, a generator, pet microchips, medical and other supplies to safely house pets in a shelter during an emergency.

During Hurricane Matthew and its aftermath, the AKC Pet Disaster Relief trailers were deployed for Polk County, FL; Greenville, SC;

Pamlico County, NC; and Cumberland County, NC which is currently in the news for the massive flooding affecting the area.

AKC Reunite President Tom Sharp and staff members Dallas Harsa and Morgan Jones visited the emergency pet shelter in Hope Mills, NC and Cumberland County Animal Control where a trailer is currently deployed, offering additional assistance to replenish supplies that were used during Hurricane Matthew.

AKC Reunite has also assisted with a \$5,000 donation to Lenoir County SPCA and has donated over \$3500 worth of equipment, including 29 crates, 50 microchips and a microchip scanner to newly afflicted Edgecombe County, NC.

"Our hearts go out to those affected by this disaster," said President Sharp. "Providing AKC Pet Disaster Relief trailers fully stocked with necessary pet

sheltering supplies to emergency responders before disasters strike allows them have a plan in place to help people and their pets. With the equipment we supply, emergency responders can open pet shelters for people and their pets during an evacuation, getting both the people and the pets out of harm's way. The American Kennel Club, AKC Reunite, and AKC dog clubs throughout the country donate time, money and energy to help pets."

From AKCReunite.org

"With the equipment we supply, emergency responders can open pet shelters for people and their pets during an evacuation, getting both the people and the pets out of harm's way."



More Information

The AKC Reunite Canine Support and Relief Fund has donated more than \$6 million since 2001 for disaster preparedness and relief causes that impact our nation's pets. AKC Reunite also provides free recovery service enrollment for all active service, military, and law enforcement K-9 dogs. Visit www.akcreunite.org for more information on the program and requesting assistance for your district.

The American Kennel Club and its affiliates do so many things for dogs everywhere.

KENNEL INSPECTION

We inspect thousands of kennels every year to ensure the safety and welfare of dogs.



HEALTH RESEARCH

Since 1995 the AKC Canine Health Foundation has raised over \$44 million for canine health research projects and education to benefit all dogs and their owners.

PET DISASTER RELIEF

We have donated over \$2 million to help local Emergency Management prepare for and provide disaster relief for people and their pets.



LOST DOG RECOVERY

We offer recovery services 24/7, 365 days-a-year, and have reunited over 400,000 lost dogs with their families.

The American Kennel Club, working with its affiliates, is the only not-for-profit registry devoted to the health and well-being of dogs.

We have allocated over \$30 million to fund programs for the betterment of dogs everywhere.

AKC IS PROUD TO HAVE THE
SUPPORT OF PURINA PRO PLAN



WE'RE MORE THAN CHAMPION DOGS.
WE'RE THE DOG'S CHAMPION.

AKC Canine Health Foundation Announces New Research Effort to Tackle Canine Lymphoma



To coincide with National Pet Cancer Awareness Month in November, the AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to prevent, treat and cure disease in all dogs, announced \$450,000 in funding for six new research grants to tackle canine lymphoma.

Lymphoma, a common form of cancer in both dogs and people, accounts for up to 25% of all canine cancer cases. Recent advancements in technology and genomics pave the way for these important studies. The six research grants have been awarded to top researchers at the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine at Colorado State University, Cornell University, North Carolina State University, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

“Progress in human medicine and breakthroughs in canine cancer genetics present an ideal time to build on CHF’s already significant body of work in canine lymphoma,” said Dr. Diane Brown, CHF CEO. “Our Scientific Review Committee was pleased at the breadth and the potential impact for these new grants to address this important, and all too common, canine cancer.” Dr. Brown continued, “Because lymphoma also affects humans, findings from this research may translate to adults and children diagnosed with this cancer.”

Lymphoma is an aggressive form of cancer in dogs, and while often treatable, there remains no available prevention or cure. The cancer can develop in either of two types of the dog’s lymphocytes (a type of white blood cell), T or B cells, and strikes dogs of any breed and at any age. The new CHF research projects are balanced to address both T cell and B cell lymphoma, target-

“Because lymphoma also affects humans, findings from this research may translate to adults and children diagnosed with this cancer.”

ing biomarkers for early diagnosis, prognosis and prevention, as well as novel approaches to therapy using genetics and the dog’s own immune system.

To learn more about CHF’s 20+ year history and more than \$12 million of funding to fight canine cancer, visit www.akcchf.org/caninecancer.

Learn More

- Established by the American Kennel Club in 1995, the AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) has a mission to advance the health and well-being of all dogs and their owners by funding scientific research and supporting the public dissemination of health information.
- Since 1995, CHF has dedicated more than \$45 million to canine health research projects and education programs.
- CHF is the largest organization funding scientific health research exclusively for dogs.
- CHF is dedicated to helping dogs live longer, healthier lives and through innovative research has funded new discoveries in the causes of disease, and improved ways to diagnose, prevent, treat and cure diseases in all dogs.
- For 2017, CHF is undertaking two special research initiatives to fund new grants for tick-borne diseases and epilepsy in dogs. The AKC will match donations to these initiatives dollar-for-dollar in 2017.
- To learn more about CHF, go to www.akcchf.org