



AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

U.S. Congress: Ask Your Member of Congress to Support the Healthy Dog Importation Act

By [AKC Government Relations](#)
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The American Kennel Club welcomes the introduction today of the bipartisan [Healthy Dog Importation Act of 2021](#) (HDIA) in the U.S. House of Representatives, and *urges you to join AKC in [thanking Representatives Kurt Schrader, DVM \(D-OR\) and Randy Johnson \(R-SD\)](#) for their leadership in introducing the measure and in asking your member of Congress to support the measure.*

The Healthy Dog Importation Act offers a valuable solution to addressing a possible public health crisis caused by unbridled imports of potentially unhealthy dogs. It also provides a more comprehensive, long-term alternative to recent temporary [bans placed that have been placed on the import of dogs from more than 100 countries](#).

Background and Bill Summary:

The American Kennel Club recognizes the value of importing select, healthy dogs from overseas, freedom of choice in choosing a pet, and ensuring that people may travel with their pets with a minimum of disruption.

However, we are also concerned about the increasing documented incidences of the importation of unhealthy random-source pets, particularly for transfer, where public and pet health may be inadequately protected.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [up to 1.25 million dogs are imported into the U.S. annually](#). Many of these dogs are coming in without valid health certificates –and many of them are carrying contagious zoonotic

diseases. Exponential growth in dog imports from a wide range of overseas sources has resulted in recent incidents of dogs with non- native parasites and zoonotic diseases such as rabies, viral infections, canine influenza, brucellosis, and others, being imported and passed onto the general public. Current pet import oversight mechanisms established prior to the exponential growth of imports are unable to protect against this public and animal health threat.

The Healthy Dog Importation Act would address these significant concerns by providing additional tools to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to prevent the import of unhealthy animals, while continuing to allow imports of healthy dogs.

Key provisions of the measure:

- Provide authority to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to determine which vaccinations and other health information is required for entry of dogs into the U.S. This authority will be carried out by USDA's Veterinary Services (VS) division.
- Require every dog entering the U.S. to be accompanied by a certificate of veterinary inspection (health certificate), issued by a licensed veterinarian accredited by a competent veterinary authority recognized by the Secretary. The health certificate must certify that the dog has received all required vaccinations and demonstrated negative test results.
- Require submission of health certificates to USDA, which will maintain a centralized, publicly available data base. Required documentation may be submitted electronically. All submitted information will be made available to the secretaries of Health and Human Services (CDC), Commerce, and Homeland Security (CBP) to promote interagency coordination and facilitate verification upon arrival in the U.S. Required documentation may be submitted electronically
- Require permanent identification of all dogs imported.
- Allow the Secretary of Agriculture to set fees for the issuance of importation permits to help offset costs for increased monitoring and oversight.

What You Can Do:

AKC strongly encourages dog owners and clubs to contact their member of Congress and ask them to support the Healthy Dog Importation Act. Let them know this is a bipartisan, common sense solution to address a significant public health threat for both pets and the people who care for them.

For additional talking points and information on this issue, view [AKC's press release](#) and visit www.akcgr.org/pet-import.

Use the form provided to directly contact your Member of Congress or visit the AKC Legislative Action Center (www.akcgr.org) and type your zip code in the "Find Officials" box to get your Congressional member's name and contact information.

AKC Government Relations will continue to provide updates as they are available. For questions or more information, contact AKC GR at doglaw@akc.org.