

HOUSE No. 1444

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Steven S. Howitt

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act changing the legal status of "pets" from personal property to "companion animals".

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Steven S. Howitt

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

4th Bristol

HOUSE No. 1444

By Mr. Howitt of Seekonk, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1444) of Steven S. Howitt relative to the penalties for a guardian abusing a domesticated companion animal. The Judiciary.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 2290 OF 2017-2018.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)

An Act changing the legal status of "pets" from personal property to "companion animals".

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 For the purposes of this bill a “companion animal” shall be considered a dog, cat or any
2 domesticated animal. Domesticated animal for purposes of this bill shall include birds, rabbits,
3 hamsters, ferrets, or any animal sharing a home with a caregiver.

4 Caregivers of “companion animals” shall be considered “guardians”.

5 Guardians of “companion animals” have a duty to protect the health and safety of the
6 animal. A companion animal may not be left outside during extreme weather including extreme
7 heat, cold, wind, rain, or hail or any weather condition which poses an adverse risk to the health
8 and safety of the “companion animal”.

9 Guardians and/or any person who abuses a “companion animal” shall have the animal
10 seized by animal control and shall be punished by:

11 First offense - imprisonment in the house of correction for a period of 6 months, but not
12 longer than 2 ½ years and a \$2,500 fine, “companion animal” abusers may not be permitted to
13 obtain another animal.

14 Second offense – imprisonment in the house of correction for a period of 1 year but not
15 longer than 2 ½ years and a \$5,000 fine and shall be put on a “do not adopt to” list. This list will
16 be published publicly. the list will be provided to all shelters, rescues, animal controls offices and
17 pet stores.

18 Third offense – imprisonment in the house of correction for a period of 2 ½ years and a
19 \$10,000 fine and shall be put on a “do not adopt to” list. This list will be published publicly. the
20 list will be provided to all shelters, rescues, animal controls offices and pet stores.