

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1444**

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**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**

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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.