

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 3258**

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

*William L. Crocker, Jr. and Timothy R. Whelan*

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 to promote safe dog ownership.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>William L. Crocker, Jr.</i>	<i>2nd Barnstable</i>	<i>1/16/2019</i>
<i>Timothy R. Whelan</i>	<i>1st Barnstable</i>	<i>1/22/2019</i>
<i>Jennifer E. Benson</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/31/2019</i>
<i>Donald F. Humason, Jr.</i>	<i>Second Hampden and Hampshire</i>	<i>1/31/2019</i>
<i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i>	<i>4th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/1/2019</i>
<i>Mark C. Montigny</i>	<i>Second Bristol and Plymouth</i>	<i>1/31/2019</i>
<i>Mathew J. Muratore</i>	<i>1st Plymouth</i>	<i>1/24/2019</i>
<i>Michael J. Soter</i>	<i>8th Worcester</i>	<i>1/22/2019</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/28/2019</i>

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By Messrs. Crocker of Barnstable and Whelan of Brewster, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3258) of William L. Crocker, Jr., Timothy R. Whelan and others relative to penalties for neglectful dog ownership. The Judiciary.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 3683 OF 2017-2018.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**  
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An Act to promote safe dog ownership.

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

1           Section 155 of Chapter 140 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official  
2 Edition, is hereby amended by striking the section in its entirety and inserting in place thereof the  
3 following:

4           If any dog owner negligently permits their dog to cause damage to the property of any  
5 person, including their pet, companion animal, or service animal, or to cause injury to any  
6 person, then the owner or keeper thereof; or if the owner or keeper be a minor, the parent or  
7 guardian of such owner or keeper thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$2,500.

8           A conviction or findings of sufficient facts on any charge brought under this section shall  
9 be prima facie evidence of liability in any action brought in connection with the following:

10 a. Any damage to any property, whether privately or publicly owned;

11 b. Any injury, illness, transmission of disease (such as rabies), or death to any person or  
12 animal which is reasonably attributable to or caused by a violation of this section;

13 But no such evidence of civil liability shall be found if such damage shall have been  
14 occasioned to the body or property of a person who, at the time such damage was sustained, was  
15 committing a trespass or other tort, or was teasing, tormenting or abusing such dog. If a minor,  
16 on whose behalf an action under this section is brought, is under seven years of age at the time  
17 the damage was done, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that such minor was not  
18 committing a trespass or other tort, or teasing, tormenting or abusing such dog.