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KENNEL CLUBSM

Sheila Goffe
Vice President
Government Relations

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The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science & Transportation
Missye_brickell@commerce.senate.gov
Brendon_plack@thune.senate.gov

The Honorable Ben Nelson
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science & Transportation
tom_chapman@commerce.senate.gov

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science & Transportation
Subcommittee on Aviation Operations
Safety & Security Subcommittee
tracy_henke@blunt.senate.gov

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science & Transportation
Subcommittee on Aviation Operations
Safety & Security Subcommittee
matt_mccarthy@cantwell.senate.gov

**Re. Inclusion of HR 4577 (Domestic Explosives Detection Canine Capacity Building Act) in
Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act (S. 1405)**

Dear Chairman Thune, Chairman Blunt, Chairman Cantwell, and Ranking Member Nelson:

Last fall, testimony before a joint subcommittee hearing of the House Oversight and Government Reform and Homeland Security Committees revealed that the United States government is relying heavily on foreign outsourcing to provide one of our most essential frontline defenses against terrorist attacks -- highly specialized explosives detection. Explosives detection canines are a critical resource used by U.S. troops overseas for force protection, and by federal, state and local law enforcement and private security throughout the United States to assure the safety of citizens at airports, stadiums, political gatherings and other public venues.

No technology is more efficient, accurate or cost effective than the explosives detection canine. Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, worldwide demand for high quality explosives detection dogs has skyrocketed and international suppliers have been unable to keep up.

The Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security indicate that 80-90% of U.S. explosives detection dogs are imported from overseas. No other aspect of national security is so heavily outsourced to foreign producers. Without domestic solutions, American security will become increasingly captive to potential market disrupters such as geopolitical disturbances, animal health epidemics, and our ability to obtain the best explosives detection dogs in highly competitive international markets.

On August 28-30, 2018, the American Kennel Club (AKC) hosted the second annual U.S. Detection Dog Conference in Durham, North Carolina. The purpose of this conference was to bring together leaders in all impacted fields to collaboratively develop solutions to this potential security crisis. Attendees included some two hundred experts –including policymakers, military, law enforcement, industry experts, top dog breeders and trainers, scientists, animal husbandry/welfare experts and others.

The consensus of experts recognizes that a domestic solution does not require resorting to government breeding programs. U.S. experts have the ability, expertise and desire to establish decentralized American breeding, raising and training facilities that not only meet America's needs, but can also produce some of the best explosives detection dogs in the world.

However, this solution must also include the establishment of sound technical, behavioral and medical standards, which will require insight and experience from both private sources and government agencies. HR 4577, the Domestic Explosives Canine Capacity Building Act, which passed the House in January of 2018, provides a model to achieve this goal. Specifically, HR 4577 directs the Transportation Security Agency to establish a working group of representatives from TSA, the Department of Homeland Security, national canine associations with expertise in breeding and pedigree, universities with experience related to explosives detection canines and canine breeding, and domestic canine breeders and vendors to establish these standards and present them to DHS.

We respectfully urge the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation to include this language in the Federal Aviation Reauthorization Act (S. 1405). Advancing this measure will help protect long-term American public security by providing needed standards and resources to enable American dog breeder and trainers to meet domestic demand for high-quality explosives detection dogs.

We appreciate your consideration and are eager to work with you. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 919-816-3720 or shg@akc.org if you have questions or I may be of assistance.

Sincerely yours,



Sheila Goffe

Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club is a non-partisan, not-for-profit purebred dog registry and educational organization dedicated to promoting responsible dog ownership, advocating for dogs as family companions, advancing canine health and well-being and working to protect the rights of all responsible dog owners.