

AKC Urges U.S. Senate to Advance HR 4577 Supporting National Security Defense, Purpose-Bred Dog Breeding & Standards for U.S. Bomb-Sniffing Dogs

Summary: The U.S. imports 80-90% of its bomb-sniffing dogs from overseas breeders. Increasing demand and a shortage of dogs places U.S. national security in unnecessary jeopardy. HR 4577 creates a path forward to improve standards and capacity for explosives detection dogs and encourages private domestic breeding programs that have the expertise to do so.

Since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, worldwide demand for high quality explosives detection dogs has skyrocketed. No technology is more efficient, accurate or cost effective than the explosives detection canines. They are a critical resource used by U.S. troops overseas for force protection, and for domestic law enforcement and security to assure the safety of citizens at airports, stadiums, political gatherings and other public venues.

Last fall, [congressional testimony](#) revealed a serious reliance upon other countries to meet our needs because 80-90% of U.S. explosives detection dogs are imported from overseas breeders.

[Without a solution to provide for more, specialized U.S.-bred detection dogs, American security will become increasingly captive to the international scarcity of explosives detection dogs](#) and the impact of geopolitical disturbances, animal health epidemics, and the U.S. ability to compete for the best explosives detection dogs in highly competitive international markets. Meanwhile, animal radicals continue to push for laws that would effectively shut down the American dog breeders who are best suited to respond.

On August 28-30, 2018, the American Kennel Club (AKC) hosted the second annual [U.S. Detection Dog Conference](#). The conference brought 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 recognized that 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. Turning this expertise into a practical solution will require the establishment of sound technical, behavioral and medical standards, with insight and experience from both private sources and government agencies.

HR 4577, which passed the U.S. House in January 2018, directs the Transportation Security Agency to establish a working group of representatives from TSA, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), 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.

Support for HR 4577 and U.S. detection dog breeding and training programs will improve safety and security for Americans at home and abroad. It also demonstrates one of the values of American dog breeders and their dedication to purpose-bred dogs.