



**SUPPORT SB784 – An Act Relative to Rabies Vaccinations (Sen. Panagiotakos)**

Referred to Joint Committee on Municipalities & Regional Government

**PROBLEM:**

In order for a dog or cat to be accepted at an animal hospital, veterinarian’s office or boarding facility proof of current vaccination against rabies must be shown. However, if a dog or cat has not been vaccinated or proof of rabies vaccination is not shown, the animal shall be vaccinated against rabies prior to being discharged if the animal’s medical condition permits.

**WHAT THIS BILL DOES:**

Allows a veterinarian to exempt an animal from the requirement of rabies vaccination for one year if a valid letter of exemption is presented which includes the medical reason for non-vaccination.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**Massachusetts Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners**

Virginia Rowland, President; blackslate@aol.com; 978-424-1044

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**SENATE . . . . . No. 784**

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

**Mr. Panagiotakos (BY REQUEST)**

*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 passage of the accompanying bill:  
An Act relative to Rabies vaccinations for dogs and cats.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Joann Camilli	778 Hildreth Street Dracut, MA 01826

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

# AN ACT RELATIVE TO RABIES VACCINATIONS FOR DOGS AND CATS.

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

SECTION 1. Section 145B of Chapter 140 of the Massachusetts General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after the first paragraph the following:

Said owner may be exempted from the requirement of vaccination for one year if a valid letter of exemption is presented. A letter of exemption may be given if a medical reason exists that precludes the vaccination of the dog or cat. Qualifying letters must be in the form of a written statement, signed by a licensed veterinarian, that includes a description of the animal, and the medical reason that precludes vaccination. If the medical reason is temporary, the letter shall indicate a time of expiration of the exemption.

SECTION 2. Said section 145B of said chapter 140, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out the third paragraph and inserting the following paragraph:

In order for a dog or cat to be accepted at an animal hospital, veterinarian's office or boarding facility an owner or keeper of such animal shall show proof of current vaccination against rabies or a valid exemption letter; provided however, that if a dog or cat has not been so vaccinated or such owner or keeper fails to show such proof of vaccination or exemption the animal shall be vaccinated against rabies prior to being discharged if the animal's medical condition permits.

## **CURRENT LAW TO BE AMENDED**

Chapter 140: Section 145B. Vaccination against rabies; certificate; tag; proof of vaccination; penalty

Section 145B. Whoever is the owner or keeper of a dog or cat in the commonwealth six months of age or older shall cause such dog or cat to be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian using a licensed vaccine according to the manufacturer's directions, and shall cause such dog or cat to be revaccinated at intervals recommended by the manufacturer. Unvaccinated dogs and cats acquired or moved into the commonwealth shall be vaccinated within ninety days after the acquisition or arrival into the commonwealth or upon reaching the age of six months, whichever last occurs. It shall be the duty of each veterinarian, at the time of vaccinating any dog or cat, to complete a certificate of rabies vaccination which shall include, but not be limited to the following information: the owner's name and address; a description of the animal, including breed, sex, age, name and distinctive markings; the date of vaccination; the rabies vaccination tag number; the type of rabies vaccine used; the route of vaccination; the expiration date of the vaccine; and the vaccine lot number.

**Insert new paragraph here:**

The veterinarian shall issue a tag with each certificate of vaccination. The tag shall be secured by the owner or keeper of such dog or cat to a collar or harness made of suitable material to be worn by the dog or cat; provided, however, that the owner of a cat may choose not to affix a tag to his cat, but shall have the tag available for inspection by authorized persons. In the event that a tag is lost, the owner or keeper of the animal shall, upon presentation of the original vaccination certificate, be issued a new tag.

**Strike the following paragraph**

In order for a dog or cat to be accepted at an animal hospital, veterinarian's office or boarding facility an owner or keeper of such animal shall show proof of current vaccination against rabies; provided however, that if a dog or cat has not been so vaccinated or such owner or keeper fails to show such proof the animal shall be vaccinated against rabies prior to being discharged if the animal's medical condition permits.

**Insert new paragraph here:**

The provisions of this section shall not apply to dogs or cats housed in a research institution.

Whoever violates the provisions of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than fifty dollars.