

Submitted by Kimberly Poland

Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government on LD 80,
An Act to Adopt the Seppala Siberian Sleddog as the Maine State Dog.

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and esteemed members of
the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:

My name is Kimberly Poland and I am from West Paris, Maine.

I own Poland Media Group and work with Poland Spring Resort as
their advertising agency.

In 1999, I sat on the board of directors for the Bethel Area Chamber
of Commerce where I was part of the committee that built the first
World's Tallest Snowman in Bethel, Maine. That project was a
successful marketing effort for not only Bethel, but for the State.

I share this with you, as I feel that the story of Togo, and the
opportunity to have the Seppala Siberian Sleddog as Maine's State
Dog, could bring great recognition, interest and marketing
opportunities for the State of Maine, which could also spur positive
economic impact through increased tourism, if we choose to make
the Seppala Siberian Sleddog Maine's State Dog.

I feel Maine is rich with history surrounding Togo and the Seppala
Siberian Sleddog and formalizing the significance makes sense at
this time. The official recognition would allow for marketing that
could lead to additional tourism and lead to additional monies
spent in the state.

I would like to talk about a few points of interest tied to Togo, the
Seppala Siberian Sleddog, and to Maine....

A bronze statue of Togo was erected in 2022 at the Poland Spring
Preservation Society in front of the Maine State Building to
memorialize Togo. The history of Togo is shared at the museum

there and includes the Togo Storybook trail for children. All ages can enjoy visiting to learn about Togo.

In Fort Kent, we host the Can-Am Crown International Sled Dog Race where mushers compete with their sled dogs.

Jonathan Hayes and his team of Seppalas from Maine just completed the Centennial Seppala Expedition. Jonathan and his family own the Poland Spring Seppala Kennels, breeding direct descendants of the original Seppala team of dogs. Jonathan has also authored a book about Togo titled The True Tails of Togo the Sled Dog!.

In Portland, the Maine State Historical Society currently has a piece to educate visitors about Togo.

Disney created a movie about Togo. Willem Dafoe starred in the movie.

Togo the sled dog is on the Top 10 Heroic Animals by Time Magazine.

All of these highlights could be used to enhance marketing and promotions of Maine and the history around Togo and the Seppala Siberian Sleddog in a way that would benefit the State of Maine, its residents and visitors.

I am here in support of L.D. 80 – An Act to Designate the Seppala Siberian Sleddog as the Maine State Dog. We should be honored to have such inspirational history surrounding us in Maine with the story of Togo, as well as to have this breed of dog so intricately woven into the grain of our history. I encourage you to pass this Act and move L.D. 80 forward.