

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 13-0132R  
(Resolution)**

---

Introduced by: Councilmembers Curran, Stokes, Clarke, Welch, Branch, Scott, Holton,  
Middleton, Reisinger, Kraft, President Young, Councilmembers Henry, Spector  
Introduced and read first time: November 4, 2013  
Assigned to: Health Committee  
Committee Report: Favorable with amendments  
Adopted: February 10, 2014

---

**A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING**

**Request for State Action – Strengthening Animal Abuse Laws**

FOR the purpose of calling on the Baltimore City Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly to act to strengthen our anti-animal abuse laws by securing the enactment of legislation tightening animal abuse penalties, criminalizing the trafficking of animal fighting paraphernalia, and creating a public registry of violent animal abusers.

**Recitals**

Animal abuse is a serious problem nationwide, throughout the state of Maryland, and within Baltimore City. Recognition of the gravity of animal abuse, and its strong links to other violent crimes, is steadily growing in our communities.

Despite this increased awareness, there is much more that could be done through our legal system to truly deter and punish these heinous crimes. Although there are numerous ways in which Maryland animal abuse law could be improved, five these simple changes that could be enacted by the next General Assembly should be treated as top priorities.

~~First, demand~~ Demand for barbaric dogfighting or cockfighting events should be attacked by increasing the penalty for attending a dogfight or cockfight in Maryland Criminal Code § 10-605 from a misdemeanor to a felony. These abusive fights should be further addressed through the enactment of a new law criminalizing the possession, transfer, or advertisement for sale of animal fighting paraphernalia.

~~Third, Maryland Criminal Code § 10-606 should be amended to increase the penalties for repeat animal abusers. Maryland law should be further amended to force abusers to pay restitution, including but not limited to the cost of an animal's care or veterinary expenses, for animal abuse.~~

The passage and enactment of HB 93/SB 149 - Criminal Law - Animal Cruelty - Payment of Costs - should be supported, which provides that defendants convicted of animal cruelty must pay costs for housing, treating, adopting out, or euthanizing a suffering/dangerous animal that has been confiscated from the defendant.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.  
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken by amendment.

**Council Bill 13-0132R**

1        The passage and enactment of SB 285 - Homeowner’s and Renter’s Insurance - Coverage for  
2 Dog Owners - should be supported, which prohibits an insurer of homeowner’s and renter’s  
3 insurance from refusing to renew or issue insurance to the owner of a specific breed of dog.

4        The passage and enactment of HB 222 - Education - Reportable Offenses - First Degree  
5 Burglary and Animal Cruelty - should be supported, which adds animal cruelty to a list of  
6 offenses for which a law enforcement agency that arrests a student is required to report the arrest  
7 to certain school officials under certain circumstances.

8        ~~Finally, a public registry of violent animal abusers should be created through State law to~~  
9 give The passage and enactment of HB 373 - Criminal Procedure - Animal Abuser Registration -  
10 should be supported, which requires animal abusers to register with certain law enforcement  
11 units for a certain period of time, including re-registering when an offender moves to a new  
12 location within the State of Maryland. This legislation would allow all shelter operators and pet  
13 owners to access the information that they need to keep their companion animals safe from those  
14 inclined to harm them.

15        Enactment of these ~~five~~ straightforward reforms would greatly modernize Maryland’s  
16 approach to animal abuse prevention; and would provide much needed tools to combat abuse’s  
17 devastating effects.

18        **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
19 Council calls on the Baltimore City Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly to act to  
20 strengthen our anti-animal abuse laws by securing the enactment of legislation tightening animal  
21 abuse penalties, criminalizing the trafficking of animal fighting paraphernalia, and creating a  
22 public registry of violent animal abusers.

23        **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Honorable  
24 Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the Maryland  
25 General Assembly, the Mayor, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.