

F R O M	Name & Title	Lindsay C. Cooper, Esq. Chair	Mayor's Anti- Abuse Advisory Commission  MEMO
	Agency Name & Address	Mayor's Anti-Animal Abuse Advisory Commission 100 N. Holliday Street, City Hall Baltimore, Maryland 21202	
	Subject	Council Bill 13-0132R Request for State Action – Strengthening Animal Abuse Laws	

To: President and Members  
of the City Council  
c/o Karen Randle

January 17, 2014

The Mayor's Anti-Animal Abuse Advisory Commission (the "Commission") is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on Council Bill 13-0132R (the "Bill"). This Bill addresses the serious problem of animal abuse that affects animals in our city, state, and country. While animals are considered "property" for the purposes of ownership, they should have a heightened level of protection beyond mere property. Laws are currently in place protecting animals from abuse. However, these laws need to be strengthened and the penalties increased as set forth in the Bill. If the changes proposed in the Bill are enacted by the Maryland General Assembly, then Law Enforcement officials will have the ability to charge offenders with crimes of greater penalties, thereby allowing prosecutors greater strength in prosecuting animal abuse cases.

According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, reports indicate that in a large majority of domestic abuse cases, there were also records of animal abuse. In addition, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence learned that 85.4% of women and 63.0% of children reported incidents of pet abuse after arriving at domestic violence shelters. See, [http://www.vachss.com/guest\\_dispatches/ascione\\_1.html](http://www.vachss.com/guest_dispatches/ascione_1.html).

The act of animal abuse is despicable and cannot be tolerated. Deterrence comes from legislation and the enforcement of that legislation. The Bill is the vehicle to reach that goal. The Commission is grateful to Councilman Curran and his staff for their dedicated work on the issue of eradicating animal abuse.

The Commission is not fully constituted at this time and is unable to vote on its position on the Bill. The Commission defers to the Baltimore City Health Department on its position on the Bill.

cc: Angela Gibson, Office of the Mayor  
Valerie Rogers, Chief of Staff, Department of Health  
Dr. Patrick Chaulk, Commissioner, Department of Health  
Amy Samman, Legislative Director, Department of Health



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