



FROM	Name & Title	Oxiris Barbot, MD Commissioner 	Health Department	 HEALTH DEPARTMENT BALTIMORE MARYLAND
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201	MEMO	
	Subject	Council Bill 13-0132R Request for State Action - Strengthening Animal Abuse Laws		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
c/o 409 City Hall

January 8, 2014

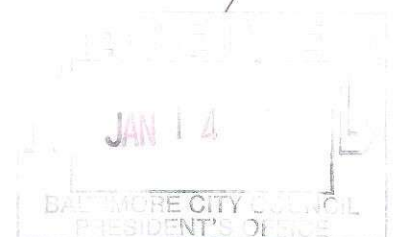
The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 13-0132R Request for State Action – Strengthening Animal Abuse Laws. The purpose of this bill is to call on the Baltimore City Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly to act to strengthen our anti-animal 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.

It is well recognized and studies have shown that people who abuse animals are also violent towards people. Randall Lockwood, the A.S.P.C.A.'s senior vice president for forensic sciences and anticruelty projects and member of Mayor's Anti-Animal Abuse Commission, explained this concept in a 2010 *New York Times* article. "We discovered that in homes where there was domestic violence or physical abuse of children, the incidence of animal cruelty was close to 90 percent. The most common pattern was that the abusive parent had used animal cruelty as a way of controlling the behaviors of others in the home. I've spent a lot of time looking at what links things like animal cruelty and child abuse and domestic violence. And one of the things is the need for power and control. Animal abuse is basically a power-and-control crime."

BCHD is committed to the health of Baltimore and is in favor of stronger penalties for animal abuse and the trafficking of animal fighting paraphernalia. Several local jurisdictions in other states have created registries over the past few years. However, it is not clear from our search of the literature that creation of a public registry for violent animal abusers would be an effective deterrent. We believe education and outreach would serve as better behavioral deterrents because these would serve to eradicate the source of the problem.

Animal abuse has a detrimental effect on both the animals and the citizens of Baltimore. We fully support the efforts to strengthen animal abuse penalties and the trafficking of fighting paraphernalia. BCHD will attend the hearing to provide any additional information and answer any questions that the Council may have.

F/Comments



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

