



BALTIMORE ANIMAL RESCUE & CARE SHELTER, INC.

April 28, 2011

Council Bill 11-0667 is a groundbreaking bill to help restrict the ownership of pets by convicted animal abusers in the City of Baltimore. Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS) completely agrees with this viewpoint and is happy to stand behind legislation that supports this. However, we do have some questions/comments on the bill as written.

There is mention of an affidavit required for license issuance that would certify neither the applicant nor anyone in the applicant's household has ever been convicted of animal abuse, cruelty or neglect. A required affidavit for each license could deter public adherence to the law. A check box could be added to the application as verification and if checked, then the license would be denied. However, how will it be enforced in the future that they don't get an animal? Who will monitor this? If an animal is already owned and the license is denied, BARCS feels the animal should be relinquished. Is there a process for Animal Control to enforce this? Is the affidavit required for license renewals? What if a person has a valid license and then a convicted abuser moves in to share the animal residence – does the partner have to give up their pet? If not, how can we be sure the pet will be protected? What penalties are in place for non-compliance?

We also feel that leniency should be shown on one of the restrictions stated in the bill. The bill declares that anyone who, "during the preceding year has failed to reclaim an impounded animal within the time required..." may be denied a license. There are many legitimate reasons a person may not get to the shelter within the three day window. Medical emergencies, incarcerations, and evictions are just some of the causes of delay in owner redemption. This restriction may be too sweeping in its wording, and BARCS feels that the other reasons for license restriction adequately cover the protection of the animal without inclusion of this.

BARCS is happy to endorse this bill, as we are all changes to laws to further protect animals in the City of Baltimore from abuse, neglect and harm. We needed to state our concerns about the proposed amendment, and enforcement of this law as it stands. Please feel free to contact us for further clarification.

Regards,

Darlene Sandets Harris

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