

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

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS), Police Department, Health Department, Mayor's Anti-Animal Abuse Advisory Commission

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

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

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

7 **Recitals**

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

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

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

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

24 Finally, a public registry of violent animal abusers should be created through State law to
25 give all shelter operators and pet owners the information that they need to keep their companion
26 animals safe from those inclined to harm them.

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

Council Bill 13-0132R

1 Enactment of these five straightforward reforms would greatly modernize Maryland’s
2 approach to animal abuse prevention, and would provide much needed tools to combat abuse’s
3 devastating effects.

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

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