



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Curran

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

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 simple changes that could be enacted by the next General Assembly should be treated as top priorities.

First, demand for barbaric dogfighting or cockfighting events should be attacked by increasing the penalty for attending a dogfight or cockfight in Maryland Criminal Code § 10605 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 § 10606 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.

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council calls 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.

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

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