



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

File #: 11-0250R, **Version:** 0

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Curran

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
**In Support of State Legislation - Senate Bill 115/House Bill 227 - Criminal Law - Abuse or Neglect of Animals
- Sentencing Conditions**

FOR the purpose of expressing support for this legislation that authorizes a court to prohibit persons guilty of specified violations concerning the abuse or neglect of animals from owning, possessing, or residing with an animal for a specified time; urging the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Judiciary Committee to report the bills favorably; requesting the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 Maryland General Assembly to support adoption of the legislation; and respectfully calling on the Governor to sign the measure into law.

Recitals

The introduction to the Interim Report of the Mayor's Anti-Animal Abuse Task Force: Submitted January 5, 20 10 states, in part: "On May 27, 2009, a young female pit bull terrier was doused with gasoline and set on fire in broad daylight in West Baltimore. . . The dog, who was subsequently named Phoenix by her caretakers, suffered severe burns over ninety-five percent (95%) of her body. Despite extensive veterinary efforts to save her life, Phoenix succumbed to kidney failure and was euthanized on May 31, 2009".

A few weeks after Phoenix's death, 2 cats were found within 2 weeks in Northwest Baltimore, burned, beaten, and tied to a school fence. These nauseating and heartless incidents sparked a public outcry and shined a spotlight on the growing problem of cruelty to animals. In response to the vicious crimes, in July 2009, the Mayor announced creation of the Anti-Animal Abuse Task Force and directed the group to study Baltimore's animal cruelty problem and to make recommendations for eradicating animal abuse in the City of Baltimore.

The introduction to its final report of July 30, 2010, acknowledges: "With the continued mutilation of animals on the streets of Baltimore, the Mayor's Anti-Animal Abuse Task Force has faced difficult challenges during the final months of its tenure. Nevertheless we continue to persevere in an ongoing quest to stop a crime that has humbled us by its severity and frequency. While we may never eradicate animal abuse entirely, the Task Force strives for a time when Baltimore is no longer the target of negative press, but rather a model for the nation in terms of the protections it offers its most vulnerable crime victims. That goal is in our reach."

In response to the charge by the Mayor to the Task Force to make recommendations regarding legislation to protect animals and prosecute abusers, included in the comprehensive recommendations for changes in Maryland law is:

· “Maryland should amend its misdemeanor and felony cruelty laws to authorize a judge, in his/her discretion, to ban a convicted defendant from owning animals for as long as is deemed necessary to protect animals”.

In painful irony, the events of these past weeks underline the need for such legislation. As the now 19-year-old twin defendants stand trial in the animal cruelty case involving the pitiable death of Phoenix, media reports reverberate with the tragic details of another instance of animal cruelty in which 2 17-year-old Baltimore City teenagers are charged with arson and animal cruelty after allegedly pouring lighter fluid on a cat trapped under an overturned milk crate and setting the cat on fire.

As evidenced by these incidents, which are only the ones that reach the press and arguably represent just a fraction of the insidious and pervasive nature of cruelty to animals in our City, critical intervention is required. To that end the Baltimore City Council requests the assistance of the Maryland General Assembly in this endeavor to secure passage of Senate Bill 115/House Bill 227.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body supports this legislation that authorizes a court to prohibit persons guilty of specified violations concerning the abuse or neglect of animals from owning, possessing, or residing with an animal for a specified time; urges the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Judiciary Committee to report the bills favorably; requests the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 Maryland General Assembly to support adoption of the legislation; and respectfully calls upon the Governor to sign the measure into law.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, the Mayor, the Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, the Honorable Chair and Members of the House Judiciary Committee, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the Chair and Members of the Mayor’s Anti-Animal Abuse Task Force, the Director of the Mayor’s Office of State Relations, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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