

HOUSE BILL 667

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4r1782
CF SB 660

By: **Delegates Kramer, Barkley, Fraser-Hidalgo, A. Miller, S. Robinson,
Simmons, Stocksdale, and Valderrama**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2014

Assigned to: Judiciary

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 10, 2014

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Crimes Relating to Animals – Unauthorized Surgical Devocalization of Cat or**
3 **Dog – Penalties**

4 FOR the purpose of prohibiting a person from surgically ~~debarking or silencing~~
5 devocalizing a dog or cat; authorizing a certain veterinarian to surgically ~~debark~~
6 ~~or silence~~ devocalize a dog or cat under certain circumstances; defining a certain
7 term; providing penalties for a violation of this Act; and generally relating to
8 crimes relating to animals.

9 BY adding to

10 Article – Criminal Law

11 Section 10-624

12 Annotated Code of Maryland

13 (2012 Replacement Volume and 2013 Supplement)

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
15 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

16 **Article – Criminal Law**

17 **10-624.**

18 **(A) (1) “DEVOCALIZE” MEANS TO PERFORM A SURGICAL PROCEDURE**
19 **INVOLVING CUTTING, NOTCHING, PUNCHING, ABRADING, LASERING, SUTURING,**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 OR OTHERWISE PHYSICALLY ALTERING THE VOCAL APPARATUS OF A DOG OR
 2 CAT WITH THE INTENT OF ALTERING, REDUCING, OR ELIMINATING VOCAL
 3 SOUNDS PRODUCED BY THE ANIMAL.

4 (2) “DEVOCALIZE” INCLUDES DEBARKING, DEVOICING,
 5 SILENCING, VENTRICULOCORDECTOMY, VOCAL CORDECTOMY, BARK
 6 REDUCTION, AND BARK SOFTENING.

7 ~~(A)~~ (B) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION ~~(B)~~ (C) OF THIS
 8 SECTION, A PERSON MAY NOT SURGICALLY ~~DEBARK OR SILENCE~~ DEVOCALIZE A
 9 DOG OR CAT.

10 ~~(B)~~ (C) A LICENSED VETERINARIAN MAY SURGICALLY ~~DEBARK OR~~
 11 ~~SILENCE~~ DEVOCALIZE A DOG OR CAT ONLY IF:

12 (1) ANESTHESIA IS ADMINISTERED TO THE ANIMAL DURING THE
 13 PROCEDURE; AND

14 (2) THE VETERINARIAN PROVIDES THE OWNER OR KEEPER OF
 15 THE ANIMAL A WRITTEN CERTIFICATION THAT:

16 (I) STATES THAT THE PROCEDURE ON THE ANIMAL WAS
 17 MEDICALLY NECESSARY TO TREAT OR RELIEVE ~~AN~~ A PHYSICAL ILLNESS, A
 18 DISEASE, OR AN INJURY, OR TO CORRECT A CONGENITAL ABNORMALITY THAT IS
 19 CAUSING OR WILL CAUSE THE ANIMAL MEDICAL HARM OR PAIN; AND

20 (II) CONTAINS:

21 1. THE DATE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE
 22 VETERINARIAN’S EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION;

23 2. SUPPORTING DIAGNOSES AND FINDINGS;

24 3. THE NAME AND CURRENT ADDRESS AND
 25 TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THE ANIMAL’S OWNER OR KEEPER; AND

26 4. THE NAME AND CURRENT ADDRESS AND
 27 TELEPHONE NUMBER, STATE LICENSE NUMBER, AND SIGNATURE OF THE
 28 VETERINARIAN.

29 ~~(C)~~ (D) A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS GUILTY OF A
 30 MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO:

1 **(1) FOR A FIRST OFFENSE, IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 90**
2 **DAYS OR A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$1,000 OR BOTH; AND**

3 **(2) FOR A SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE, IMPRISONMENT**
4 **NOT EXCEEDING 1 YEAR OR A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$2,000 OR BOTH.**

5 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
6 October 1, 2014.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.