

# **Lacey\_FAV\_SB505**

Uploaded by: Lacey, Claire

Position: FAV

## **Testimony in support of Senate Bill 505**

From Claire Lacey, Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City MD 21042  
camelot108@gmail.com

This is my written testimony in support of Senate Bill 505, Crimes Against Animals, Interference With Equines

I am writing as an individual and as President of the My Lady's Manor Driving Club (the only American Driving Society affiliated club in Maryland) in support of SB505. I am an ADS listed instructor and a Carriage Association of America Certified Driver. I have spent over 40 years studying and sharing knowledge about horses. I have competed successfully at high levels in several types of riding and also in driving horses. I also work on rehabilitation horses with physical or behavioral issues. I have also been a large animal Vet Tech with experience in animal behavior, control and biosecurity. Drawing on my knowledge and experience I have provided information on safe practices and risk management of equines in public spaces to several jurisdictions in Maryland.

We have over 100,000 horses in Maryland with an economic impact of \$2.1 Billion including \$78 million in tax revenue. More than 50% of households in Maryland contain a horse enthusiast and we are known internationally for our horse culture in this State (American Horse Council 2017 census). Yet we are at a place in time that those living an agrarian life working with animals are rapidly declining and actual knowledge of the appropriate care and handling of livestock animals is no longer common knowledge.

Every Spring veterinarians get urgent calls to see horses that are flat out on their sides who are actually sunbathing. I've been called cruel for "blindfolding" my horses when they are actually wearing special screen masks that protect from flies. At a Frederick City Council meeting animal rights activists testified that horses were forced to work who were lame- that were in fact just resting a hindleg. It took a veterinarian to testify that this was completely normal behavior- similar to us resting a leg when standing. I have been told I "should take down (my) fences so horses could roam freely as they would in nature". It was a serious suggestion from someone who was willing to help do it!

As separated as many people are from the agrarian life there are some who are willing to believe the worst about All farmers and All who exhibit or have large animals based on the poor husbandry and treatment of animals by few. There has been a romanticizing of horses in public perception due to books and movies such as “The Black Stallion” (Walter Farley) and “Spirit, Stallion of the Cimmaron” that has led to a lot of misunderstanding and anthropomorphizing with a result that the true nature of horses and interacting with them is ignored. This is not just my observation but also that of Olympic Gold Medalist Denny Emerson and others who work to educate on good riding and care.

This bill is an important piece of legislation that offers protection and some peace of mind to those who are willing to share their love and knowledge of animals with those who want to see them. It adds needed strength to their voice that when they say “No, do not touch the animal” it means NO. People often try to continue justifying it verbally with “animals like me”. That may be true but in that moment the handler has seen something that No is appropriate. Having an automatic “No” in place, that animals may not be interfered with- even when the animals are just in a pasture, empowers good biosecurity practices. We need this bill.

Equestrians are supposed to be able to share the road as do cyclists and in quieter areas that still happens- especially where there are small farms amongst subdivision development. The neighbors usually like that farms keep some space open and green and enjoy seeing the horses. But there are those who think it fun to scare the horses when they are out on the roads. This creates risk of severe injury to rider, bystanders, and horses and damage to equipment or properties. A driving horse may never accept driving again as it requires a higher level of trust. These days you will not be able to just fill in a hoof print on a lawn. You will most likely get a big bill from a landscaper and threat of a lawsuit. Prevention is better than cure. We need this bill.

Even an animal in a field needs this bill. Gates left open or fencing destroyed allowing animals out create public nuisance, danger to those driving cars, risk of severe injury to people and the animals themselves. I had gates opened several times when a developer I was leasing from was trying to “encourage” me to break a lease (if I had it resulted in immediate need to move plus substantial financial penalties). There are other reasons it happens but having this legislation in place may deter people from

endangering the public with such actions. With no limits on Equine Liability in Maryland, even though we take all precautions as animal owners we are legally liable and vulnerable to losing everything through legal action against us- and all because of someone else's actions. We need this bill.

I support free speech but all too often we see that speech degenerate into hatred, vehement words, insults and energy directed at the person *when the horse is in such proximity that it is difficult for them not to think it is directed at them*. Horses in particular are acutely aware of energy around them. That proximity is a key issue as it creates considerable stress and uncertainty for the horse and can result in panic, rearing and bolting. Horses can react and move much faster than most large animals and in a state of panic represent a considerable danger to others and themselves with a high risk of injury. As many equestrian events are now held on Public Land or in Public spaces this is a perfect storm for a serious accident to occur. We need this bill.

I sincerely hope this bill passes so we can continue to share our animals safely with those who want to enjoy them. I thank those who have sponsored it as it is much needed provision for public health and safety as well as the safety of our animals and our right to enjoy lawful pursuits with them whether competitive, recreational or even just stewardship and coexistence with them.

# **Lambert\_FAV\_SB505**

Uploaded by: Lambert, Jessica

Position: FAV

## Support for SB 505

I am co-owner of Lambert's Carriage Company and a lifelong horse owner. My father, Donnie Lambert, and I provide carriage rides in downtown Frederick and the surrounding areas during the holiday season. We began the carriage company ten years ago as an avenue to share our passion of draft horses and driving with the community. For many people riding our carriages, this is the only opportunity for them to interact directly with a large animal. Many of our patrons come back year after year to see our horses and take a relaxing ride thru the City of Frederick. This seasonal business is really a hobby for us, as my father is a dairy farmer and I am a full-time veterinarian.

Throughout the ten years of doing carriage rides in downtown Frederick, there have been many instances of people willfully and maliciously interfering with the carriage horses. Six years ago, we had a lady stand in front of our horses yelling and insisting that we unhook them. She refused to move despite our requests, until we threatened to call law enforcement. For the last three years we have been regularly harassed by an animal rights group called the Frederick Vegan Army. They have pushed the boundaries of their First Amendment right by harassing and stalking my father and I, our employees, our patrons and our horses. Two years ago, one member of this group brought his two husky dogs to the protests. They repeatedly barked, growled and lunged at the edge of their leashes. The owner intentionally stood at the front of the horses and allowed his growling dogs to get within inches of them. Despite our requests for him to relocate further up the street when the horses were getting unsettled, he simply laughed and stayed in his place. Last carriage season, three men from this animal rights group chased my carriage for two blocks yelling profanities and threats. In response, my horses picked up their pace and were obviously stressed at the incident. On other occasions, they have stalked the wagon in their vehicles while yelling out the window or leaned signs into the streets as the horses were driving by, missing them by inches. These are just a few examples of the interferences that my horses have had to endure throughout the past few years.

We have been very fortunate that the horses nor the carriage riders have been harmed as a result of any of these events. Despite that, these actions pose a huge risk to the animals and the public. The protests have required a large police presence each night. Despite their presence, there has been very few legal actions that the police have taken in response to these incidences. This has been largely due to the lack of legislature pertaining to working horses specifically.

In conclusion, we see an immediate need for legislature that would criminalize behaviors where people willfully and maliciously interfere with the carriage horses. We certainly do not want to tread on anyone's right to free speech, but we do want to promote a safe environment for our horses and patrons. We hope that SB 505 will protect the safety of our horses and allow them to do their seasonal work without harassment. We also hope that this bill will give the police officers leverage to reduce such dangerous situations.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Lambert, DVM  
Lambert's Carriage Company, Co-Owner

# **MD Horse Council\_FAV\_SB505**

Uploaded by: Seigler, Jane

Position: FAV

SB 505 - Crimes Against Animals - Interference With Equines  
Testimony of Maryland Horse Council, (Jane Seigler), SUPPORT

Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, February 13,  
2020



The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based, umbrella trade association of the entire horse industry in Maryland. Our membership includes horse farms and stables, horse-related businesses, and horse owners, representing all facets of the Maryland equestrian community, from the owners of race horses to the owners of trail horses or just beloved retired companion horses. As such, we represent over 30,000 Marylanders.

The Maryland Horse Council supports SB 505.

SB 505 amends existing law. Section 10-620 of the Criminal Law Article. That statute currently punishes willful and malicious injury to or interference with horses used for racing, breeding or competition. The purpose of that law is to protect not only the horses, but also the general public, against ill-advised actions by individuals that might cause harm to themselves, the horses and others.

The current law takes into account actions by, for example, intoxicated persons, those with mental health issues, or those with ideological or political agendas, who target racing, breeding or competition horses to make their point. However, horses and other equines are frequently seen in circumstances that are even more unsecured and exposed to mischief and mayhem than at racetracks, horse show facilities and breeding farms.

Horses and other equines being used or exhibited for carriage rides, parades and fairs, for example, are very exposed to close interactions with the public, and therefore are vulnerable to incidents that may become out of control or dangerous.

We urge the committee to make the common sense decision to add all equines to this existing law that is intended to prevent avoidable harm and injury to animals and the public.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jane Seigler".

The Maryland Horse Council

MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL  
PO BOX 606  
LISBON, MD 21765



# **MarylandFarmBureau\_FWA\_SB505**

Uploaded by: Ferguson, Colby

Position: FWA



# Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

3358 Davidsonville Road • Davidsonville, MD 21035 • (410) 922-3426

February 13, 2020

To: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

## **Re: Support of SB 505 - Crimes Against Animals - Interference With Equines**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of SB 505 with an amendment, legislation that expands the scope of current law that prohibits the interfering with, injuring, tampering with, or destroying a horse used for racing or breeding or for a competitive exhibition of skill, breed, or stamina by including all horses. A person who violates this section of current law is guilty of a felony and on conviction is subject to imprisonment of not less than 1 year and not exceeding 3 years.

There have been several instances over the last few years where farmers and horse owners have had people interfere with their animals and cause undue harm and potential injury. Many cases have been around horse carriage rides and at county fairs. This bill would add these horses to current state law that prohibits someone from doing these acts of violence.

**Maryland Farm Bureau Policy:** We oppose animal rights activism that disrupts farming operations, Ag related activities on and off the farm, fairs, racetracks, livestock sales or research facilities.

**Amendment:** Since this bill only expands to all horses instead of including the other livestock, MFB is asking for an amendment to include all livestock.

## **MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SB 505 WITH AN AMENDMENT**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colby Ferguson'.

Colby Ferguson  
Director of Government Relations

*For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396*