



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

To: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senate members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

In support of: SB 627

Date: March 10th, 2020

Testimony by: Ashley Mauceri, Director, Law Enforcement Outreach

Honorable members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 627 that will protect dogs from extreme weather by requiring they have appropriate shelter.

My name is Ashley Mauceri and I am the Director of Law Enforcement Outreach for The Humane Society of the United States. I have been in the field of animal welfare for 10 years and have had the opportunity to assist enforcement officers across the country with many cruelty cases. Reports of dogs left outside in dangerous weather are very common, but vagueness of current law can make it difficult for enforcement officers to act before a dog has suffered injury or death due to exposure.

Last year's brutally cold winter highlighted the need for this bill as temperatures plummeted (on January 31st 2019, Frederick registered an actual temperature of -3 degrees) and weather warnings were issued throughout the state. Maryland's current law offers no meaningful protections for dogs left outdoors in these conditions.

It is a common misconception that dogs' fur enables them to withstand extreme cold. Dogs of any breed who are exposed to extreme conditions for long periods of time can suffer from hypothermia or death. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) recommends that dogs, even thick-coated arctic breeds, should not be left outside during below freezing weather – and especially not without appropriate shelter.

The definition of "suitable shelter" proposed in this bill is very reasonable. Specifically, this legislation will ensure dogs have protection when temperatures are below 32 or above 90 degrees, or during a severe weather warning issued by the National Weather Service. For example, if a dog were kept outside on that -3-degree day in Frederick, the bill would require he have a shelter that is weatherproof and made of materials not easily degradable by the elements.

SB 627 is clear, enforceable, designed to solve a problem at hand, and reasonable for citizens to comply. It will protect dogs who live outdoors without creating an undue hardship for owners, and we look forward to its passage.

Thank you very much for your time and for your efforts to protect the dogs of Maryland.

The Humane Society of the United States requests that SB 627 be reported favorably.

Ashley Mauceri
Director, Law Enforcement Outreach
240-449-0853