



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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January 26, 2022

To: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Emergency Medical System Plan - Guidelines for Emergency Medical Services - Law Enforcement Canines – SB 70- Support.

Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chairman Kagan, members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before to you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee vote favorably for Emergency Medical System Plan - Guidelines for Emergency Medical Services - Law Enforcement Canines – SB 70.

This bill would allow for law enforcement canines injured in the line of duty to receive emergency medical services by authorized emergency medical services personnel as part of the Maryland Emergency Medical System plan and guidelines.

In 2017, Maryland Votes for Animals worked with Senators Lam and Lee to pass the Pets and First Responders Bill which gives First Responders civil immunity when providing emergency medical care to animals. Prior to that bill's passage, it was illegal for anyone who was not a licensed veterinarian to treat an animal for any injury. This came as a surprise to the first responders as it was standard practice for firefighters to save pets from burning buildings as the terrified families waited anxiously for their their beloved dog or cat to not only emerge with the firefighter, but to also receive life-saving emergency care. Yet, according to Maryland Law at the time, firefighters technically could not even place a pet oxygen mask on a suffocating dog or cat. Seeing this as a problem, first responders who provided a wide range of emergency and public safety services rallied to support this bill from MIEMS, to police, to the Maryland Firefighters Association. Many spoke passionately at the hearings about the importance of saving these animals' lives. They considered it not only part of their job, but some of the most rewarding aspects of their service.

We need to strengthen protection for law enforcement K-9's who are injured at the while they are on the job, usually at the scene of an emergency and under grave circumstances. In 2021, Maryland passed legislation to pay for veterinary expenses for law enforcement canines after they have paid their debt to society. SB 70 would ensure that the canines who put themselves in danger to protect human lives are cared for in the line of duty. Time is critical with injuries, so this protection could mean the difference between life and death for these dogs, who are usually doing very dangerous work in hazardous conditions. It's the least we can do for these canines who risk so much to ensure our safety.

I would like to thank Senator Carozza for her sponsorship of this bill and urge a favorable report.

