



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**January 26, 2022**

**Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee**



**SB70**

***Emergency Medical System Plan - Guidelines for Emergency Medical Services -  
Law Enforcement Canines***

**FAVORABLE**

The Animal Welfare Institute, the Humane Society of the United States, and Maryland Votes for Animals, on behalf of our members and supporters in Maryland, urge a favorable report on 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 State's Emergency Medical System plan and guidelines.

Maryland has already taken a strong first step by passing Senator Lam's legislation in 2017 that first responders are able to provide assistance to an animal without fear of liability. And just last year the legislature again took an important step forward by authorizing a fund to provide for the medical care of retired canines. The reform proposed in SB 70 would both build on and reinforce that framework by ensuring law enforcement canines receive the care they both need and deserve on the scene of their injury.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our law enforcement working dogs, who provide services that cannot be replicated by people or machines. These dogs deserve the ability to do their jobs with the confidence that they will be looked after should an incident occur. However, for a dog injured in the line of duty, accessing veterinary care in a timely manner can be a barrier that can have fatal consequences. And sadly, due to the jobs these dogs perform, they are more than likely to require emergency veterinary care due to the hazardous nature of their service.

This legislation would ensure that law enforcement dogs receive timely and often life-saving care. It is worth noting that this provision would enhance the law passed in 2017. If EMTs are prepared to provide assistance to law enforcement K9s, they will also be more prepared to respond to situations where companion animals are at risk – making Maryland safer for all our beloved companion animals.

Laws similar to SB70 exist in at least California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Mississippi, and Wisconsin, as well as local ordinances across the Country. This is a life-saving and valuable bill that builds on existing state law and reinforces that Maryland wants to protect our working canines.

The groups listed above urge a favorable report on SB70.

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