



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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February 18, 2026

To: House Health Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Business Regulation – Pet Cremation and Burial Services – Requirements (Pet Cremation and Burial Services Consumer Protection Act) - HB 564 - Support

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 564. My name is Lisa Radov, President and Chair of Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. We champion legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. On behalf of our board of directors, as well as the thousands of members of Maryland Votes for Animals, I respectfully ask that this committee vote favorably for Business Regulation – Pet Cremation and Burial Services – Requirements (Pet Cremation and Burial Services Consumer Protection Act) - HB 564.

This bill establishes consumer protection requirements for registered cemeterians, registered cemetery operators, and certain permit holders that sell or offer pet cremation services. It defines the duties of individuals and businesses responsible for the cremation of pet remains and for returning those remains to animal owners.

The death of a beloved family pet is a profoundly emotional experience. It affects every member of the household—from adults who assume financial responsibility and daily care, to children who form deep, lasting bonds with their pets. For many children, the loss of a pet is their first experience with death. Because of this emotional vulnerability, businesses that profit from handling the remains of beloved pets must be held to clear and enforceable standards. Maryland needs regulations to ensure that pet cremation providers handle animals' final remains in the manner they promise and that pet owners expect.

HB 564 establishes best practices that are already required across most business and service industries operating in Maryland. In closely related fields, Maryland funeral homes and crematories are subject to strict state regulation, including permitting requirements through the Department of Labor and oversight by the Maryland State Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors. Businesses that handle the remains of deceased pets should be held to comparable standards of accountability and professionalism.

Other states have recognized this need. New York and Nevada have enacted laws specifically regulating pet cremation services. In July 2025, Pennsylvania introduced similar legislation in response to questionable practices by some pet cremation providers.

It is time to provide Maryland pet owners with the peace of mind that comes from knowing their beloved pet's final remains are treated with respect, dignity, and in full compliance with state law.

I would like to thank Delegate Allen for his sponsorship of HB 564 and urge a favorable report.