



February 3, 2026
House Judiciary Committee
HB 53
End Private Possession of Zebras, Kangaroos, and Wallabies

FAVORABLE

To: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Liz Cabrera Holtz, Maryland Resident and Senior Campaigns Manager at World Animal Protection

As a Maryland resident and on behalf of World Animal Protection and our Maryland supporters, I urge the committee to support HB 53, which would end the private possession of zebras, kangaroos, and wallabies. Maryland already prohibits the private possession of many wild animals, including nonhuman primates and wild cats. HB 53 would address gaps in Maryland's private possession laws and promote public safety and animal welfare.

Zebras have escaped multiple times from private homes, as well as licensed exhibitors and breeders, both across the country and in Maryland. These incidents require extensive law enforcement and public resources. Kangaroos and wallabies—members of a category known as macropods—are easily purchased online, experience significant harm within the pet trade, and are increasingly escaping from captivity.

Protecting Public Safety

Zebras are wild animals who behave unpredictably, often biting and kicking. Their kick can break human bones and cause serious internal injuries. Kangaroos and wallabies are part of the family Macropodidae. Kangaroos can reach up to 200 pounds. Kangaroos are muscular animals who can balance on their tails to execute forceful kicks with their sharply clawed feet. [A kangaroo's kick can be lethal to humans](#). In 2025, a man was [killed](#) by a kangaroo at a children's petting zoo in South Carolina. Wallabies can reach up to 60 pounds. Like kangaroos, they have strong hind legs and sharp claws.

Advancing Animal Welfare

When kept in human homes, wild animals like zebras, kangaroos, and wallabies are deprived of the ability to engage in their natural behaviors, resulting in physical and psychological suffering. An enclosure in a house or yard cannot replicate the space and freedom these animals enjoy in the wild.

Kangaroos and wallabies are commonly sold by breeders, dealers, and at auctions—suffering each step of the way. Joeys are prematurely taken from their mothers before they are weaned, which results in long-term physical and psychological deficits. It is also very difficult to provide their specialized diets and to find veterinarians who can treat them knowledgeably.

To protect public safety and advance animal welfare, World Animal Protection urges the passage of HB 53.

Liz Cabrera Holtz
Senior Campaigns Manager, World Animal Protection
Potomac, MD 20854
(301) 332-8032
lizcabreraholtz@worldanimalprotection.us