



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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January 23, 2020

To: Senate Education, Health and Environment Affairs Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Solid Waste Management – Prohibition on Releasing a Balloon into the Atmosphere – SB 28 - 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. Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. champions humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our thousands of members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee vote favorably for Solid Waste Management – Prohibition on Releasing a Balloon into the Atmosphere – SB 28.

This bill would ban balloon releases in Maryland, placing a civil fine for intentionally releasing balloons into the atmosphere. Often touted as environmentally-friendly, latex balloons can take anywhere from six months to four years to biodegrade. They can travel for miles when they become airborne and can go even farther distances when riding along with other debris floating in the ocean. Often mistaken for food, pose a hazard for marine species, birds, and other wildlife. Colorful, and often sporting ribbons and tassels, wildlife are attracted to the balloons and can become entangled in their remnants, resulting in permanent injury or death.

There are a plethora of creative and eco-friendly alternatives to balloon releases such as colorful streamers, giant bubbles, ribbon dancers, and more. Five states, neighboring Virginia, California, Connecticut, Florida, and Tennessee as well as numerous cities, including Baltimore, have balloon release bans. Similar legislation passed in Queen Anne's County in 2019.

SB 28, which eliminates a source of pollution and pain to our environment and animals, a bill about banning the release of balloons, should not be a heavy lift for this committee.

In closing, I thank for Senator Lam for sponsoring this bill, and urge a favorable report on SB 28.

Let Kindness Reign, Vote Humane

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