



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 1537

DATE: March 6, 2020

SPONSOR: Delegate Chang

ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation

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POSITION: SUPPORT (Montgomery County Department of Police, Animal Services Division)

Criminal Law – Humane Society and Animal Control Officers – Education and Training Requirements

House Bill 1537 would require humane society officers and animal control officers to take 80 hours of animal care and control training within the first 12 months of their employment. Additionally, these individuals would be required to take at least six hours of continuing education each year. Montgomery County Department of Police, Animal Services Division, supports this legislation.

This is the first step in establishing training for officers enforcing State and county laws and regulations that support public safety efforts and compliance with basic standards of care for animals in our community. There are both State and national basic training programs for new officers, but unlike our neighbors in Virginia, Maryland has no requirement for animal control officers to receive the very important and informative training that covers animal laws, enforcement techniques, animal health related issues, and species-specific behaviors and/or tendencies.

Continuing education requirements are also key to the ongoing development and knowledge of officers working in the field. Changes in legal requirements, techniques, and methods are constantly occurring and keeping up with the latest updates is very important to the success of the enforcement of the laws and regulations that these officers provide to our community.

House Bill 1537 would take an important step toward setting the standard of professionalism in animal welfare and public safety through education and training requirements. The Montgomery County Department of Police, Animal Services Division, supports this bill and urges the Committee to adopt a favorable report.