



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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February 13, 2020

Finance Committee
Maryland Senate
11 Bladen St Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for SB 260 Labor and Employment - Leave With Pay - Bereavement Leave (Family Bereavement Act)

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and members of the committee,

The Humane Society of the United States, representing our members and supporters in Maryland, supports SB 260 introduced by Senator Washington to authorize employees of employers that offer paid leave to use certain leave with pay for bereavement leave in the event of the death of an immediate family member or a pet of the employee.

When a person you love dies, it's natural to feel sorrow, express grief, and expect friends and family to provide understanding and comfort.

Unfortunately, you do not always get that understanding when a pet dies. Some people still do not understand how central animals can be in people's lives, and a few may not understand grieving over "just a pet."

We know how much pets mean to most people. People love their pets and consider them members of their family. Animals provide companionship, acceptance, emotional support, and unconditional love. So when a beloved pet dies, it's not unusual to feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your sorrow.

Coping with the loss of a pet can be particularly hard for some, like seniors. Those who live alone may feel a loss of purpose and an emptiness. A pet's death may also trigger painful memories of other losses and remind caregivers of their own mortality.

The grief process is as individual as the person, and SB 260 is an important acknowledgement about the human need to grieve loss. I respectfully request the committee give SB 260 a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Emily Hovermale
Maryland and Delaware State Director