

## **4PawsPetServices\_FAV\_SB627**

Uploaded by: Freedman, Joy

Position: FAV

Hello members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings, My testimony is in reference to passing SB627. My name is Joy Freedman, I am a dog behaviorist, member of the Baltimore city animal hearing panel, adjunct instructor at Anne Arundel community college teaching elements of canine behavior, former member of the Baltimore County Animal advisor commission, and a co-author of Oscars law which passed unanimously in 2018 by the Baltimore County Council.

Today you will hear testimony about Oscar, a chow mix, and how he froze to death in a Baltimore county yard. His owner left on a business trip and used the dog door as a means for his frail elderly dog to come and go. Once Oscar laid down in the yard he could not muster the strength to get back at up. Since this law was enacted in 2018, it has given Baltimore county animal enforcement officers another tool in their tool belt when investigating neglect cases. We have no way of tracking specific case related to Oscars law, however the director of BCAS is confident that this has saved the lives of hundreds of dogs.

When writing this bill with my colleagues two years ago, we sought similar legislation to model it off of. We found Libres law in Pennsylvania. An extreme weather bill, that also includes penalties for tethering, was passed into law in May of 2015. It includes fines of up to \$300 and/or 90days in prison for the first offense, and up to 180 days in jail and a \$2000. fine for repeat offenders. Like Maryland, Pennsylvania has a strong hunting and fishing culture. They passed this law 5 years ago. Just behind PA, is New Jersey. Van Drews Bill was signed into law in August of 2017.

Both of these bills were named after dogs that had died in a similar fashion to Oscar. One more thing these laws have in common is that they were passed with bi-partisan support and signed into law by a republican Governor.

It is about time Maryland joined its neighboring states of similar climates and state houses and shows how much this state loves and protects its pets. Lets make this the year we finally pass House bill HB406. Thank you Delegate Mary Lehman for sponsoring this bill.

## **Balt Co Council\_Councilman David Marks\_ FAV\_SB 627**

Uploaded by: Marks, Councilman David

Position: FAV



**COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY**  
COURT HOUSE, TOWSON, MARYLAND 21204

DAVID MARKS  
COUNCILMAN, FIFTH DISTRICT  
COUNCIL5@BALTIMORECOUNTYMD.GOV

COUNCIL OFFICE: 410-887-3384  
FAX: 410-887-5791

February 21, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to support enactment by the Maryland General Assembly of a statewide law similar to Oscar's Law in Baltimore County.

I cosponsored this legislation in 2018 because I was concerned the county administration was not vigilant about ensuring animal welfare. The bill was inspired by Oscar, a chow chow who died during the winter. Neighbors pleaded for help as the dog was left outside in the cold. Some animal welfare activists expressed frustration that Animal Services took no action against Oscar's owner.

Oscar's Law establishes metrics that require animals to be brought inside during certain conditions. It brings a greater sense of objectivity to the process by which professionals regulate animal welfare.

Animal welfare is not a partisan issue. It is an issue of good government that we should expect in a caring, compassionate society. I strongly support broader implementation of Oscar's Law at the statewide level.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Marks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Marks  
Baltimore County Councilman

# **The Humane Society of the United States\_FAV\_SB 627**

Uploaded by: Mauceri, Ashley

Position: FAV



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**To:** Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senate members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**In support of:** SB 627

**Date:** March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Testimony by:** Ashley Mauceri, Director, Law Enforcement Outreach

Honorable members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 627 that will protect dogs from extreme weather by requiring they have appropriate shelter.

My name is Ashley Mauceri and I am the Director of Law Enforcement Outreach for The Humane Society of the United States. I have been in the field of animal welfare for 10 years and have had the opportunity to assist enforcement officers across the country with many cruelty cases. Reports of dogs left outside in dangerous weather are very common, but vagueness of current law can make it difficult for enforcement officers to act before a dog has suffered injury or death due to exposure.

Last year's brutally cold winter highlighted the need for this bill as temperatures plummeted (on January 31<sup>st</sup> 2019, Frederick registered an actual temperature of -3 degrees) and weather warnings were issued throughout the state. Maryland's current law offers no meaningful protections for dogs left outdoors in these conditions.

It is a common misconception that dogs' fur enables them to withstand extreme cold. Dogs of any breed who are exposed to extreme conditions for long periods of time can suffer from hypothermia or death. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) recommends that dogs, even thick-coated arctic breeds, should not be left outside during below freezing weather – and especially not without appropriate shelter.

The definition of "suitable shelter" proposed in this bill is very reasonable. Specifically, this legislation will ensure dogs have protection when temperatures are below 32 or above 90 degrees, or during a severe weather warning issued by the National Weather Service. For example, if a dog were kept outside on that -3-degree day in Frederick, the bill would require he have a shelter that is weatherproof and made of materials not easily degradable by the elements.

SB 627 is clear, enforceable, designed to solve a problem at hand, and reasonable for citizens to comply. It will protect dogs who live outdoors without creating an undue hardship for owners, and we look forward to its passage.

Thank you very much for your time and for your efforts to protect the dogs of Maryland.

**The Humane Society of the United States requests that SB 627 be reported favorably.**

**Ashley Mauceri**  
**Director, Law Enforcement Outreach**  
**240-449-0853**

# **Professional Animal Workers of Maryland\_FAV\_SB 627**

Uploaded by: Quimby, Patty

Position: FAV



**Maryland's Association of Animal Care and Control  
Agencies and Humane Societies**

**PO Box 1143  
Easton, Maryland 21601**

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**SB 627 Unattended Dogs in Extreme Weather Conditions  
Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Tuesday March 10, 2020**

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**Dear Honorable Chairman Smith Vice Chair Waldstreicher and members of the committee:**

Professional Animal Workers of Maryland, the state organization comprised of animal control agencies and humane societies stands in support of SB 627. This bill is placing safety as a priority by requiring dog owners within Maryland to fulfill minimum standards of care at all times; including during extreme weather- when temperatures fall below 32 degrees Fahrenheit or over 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

The bill as written is not requiring more than what is expected as minimum care standards for dogs during extreme weather by national organizations such as American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). Per the AVMA: "Generally, for dogs and cats, the ambient temperature should be kept above 50 degrees Fahrenheit ( 10 degrees Celsius), and below 80 degrees Fahrenheit (26.6 degrees Celsius), and the relative humidity should range from 30 to 70%. Animals should be protected from extreme temperatures so as to maintain their health and render their environment comfortable. When climatic conditions pose a threat to the animal's health or well-being, taking into consideration its age, breed, overall health status, and acclimation, then appropriate measures must be taken to alleviate the impact of those conditions."

Requiring dog owners, regardless of the breed, age, size, of their dog to ensure their animal's have safe and appropriate shelter in all weather conditions in MD state law is creating a more humane environment across the state. While it is true several counties and jurisdictions have created their own extreme weather ordinances in response to the absence of such regulations at the state level, there are still many areas across Maryland lacking any ordinances or laws which give agencies the teeth to protect the most vulnerable animals in our communities.

Our organization stands in support of SB 627 in an effort to provide a safe environment for the animals served by our agencies and organizations across Maryland. This addition to the law is long overdue and necessary.

Thank you for your time. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

***Patty Crankshaw-Quimby***

Executive Director/Chief Animal Control Officer: Talbot Humane/ Talbot County Animal Control

President: Professional Animal Workers of Maryland



## **Maryland Votes for Animals\_FAV\_ SB 627**

Uploaded by: Radov, Lisa

Position: FAV



## MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411  
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

March 10, 2020

To: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.  
Re: Crimes – Unattended Dogs in Extreme Weather Conditions- SB 627 - SUPPORT

Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Waldstreicher, members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before to you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Judicial Proceedings Committee vote favorably for Crimes – Unattended Dogs in Extreme Weather Conditions – SB 627.

This bill will give law enforcement and the public clear and consistent minimum standards with respect to leaving dogs outside and unattended in extreme weather conditions. Extreme weather laws have recently passed in ten Maryland counties. There are fundamental similarities, as well as differences, in each of those laws. This bill is the result of feedback from animal control agencies across Maryland, including those that had and had not passed extreme weather laws, to find language that would work in counties as diverse as Garrett, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, Carroll, Montgomery, Baltimore County and Baltimore City. One of the key pieces of feedback was that it is impossible for some owners to bring their large, outdoor dogs into their homes in extreme weather. This bill not only enumerates basic, commonsense standards to protect unattended dogs from suffering in extreme weather conditions, but also it allows for dogs to remain outdoors in these conditions provided that they have continuous access to suitable shelter, which is defined in the bill.

Animal control officers are usually called when it is almost too late and dogs are suffering seizures, heatstroke, hypothermia, and death after being outdoors for long periods of time in extreme weather conditions. This bill will reduce the suffering these animals endure, and the serious consequences, including death, caused by these conditions. It will provide a consistent standard across Maryland that does not change as a dog is moved between jurisdictions.

Establishing guidelines about dogs left outdoors enables animal control officers to intervene before a dog shows symptoms of acute distress. Moreover, adding clarity to the law can foster both public awareness and compliance, which could potentially avert some of these life-threatening situations before they occur.

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Kramer for his sponsorship of SB 627 and ask this committee for a favorable report.

*Let Kindness Reign, Vote Humane*

WWW.VOTEANIMALS.ORG

*February 9, 2020*

## **Balt Co Animals Serv Comm\_Deb Stone\_ FAV\_SB 627**

Uploaded by: Stone Hess, Deborah

Position: FAV

Hello, and thank you for the opportunity to speak about SB 627.

My name is Deborah Stone Hess. I chair the Baltimore County Animal Services Advisory Commission. Our Commission was created by the Baltimore County Council to advise on matters concerning Baltimore County Animal Services, which is made up of our county-run shelter and Animal Control Division.

In 2018, our County Council passed a bill very similar to SB 627. It's known as Oscar's Law, and was created after the death of a dog named Oscar.

Oscar's story is tragic. For years, he was often left outside in a yard without shelter from the elements. Citizens concerned for his welfare in bad weather called Animal Services repeatedly.

On December 30, 2017, someone called again after a picture of Oscar lying lifeless in the snow was posted on Facebook. That photo is included with my written testimony.

Oscar died later that day of hypothermia. His owner entered an Alford plea to a charge of animal cruelty.

Members of our Commission were deeply disturbed. One of our Commission members, Joy Freedman, and two other animal advocates, Darla Feeheley, and Julianne Zimmer worked with

County Councilmen David Marks and Tom Quirk to draft Oscar's Law which ultimately passed unanimously.

Its aim...to ensure that no animal in Baltimore County would be left without shelter in extreme weather...temperatures below 32 degrees or above 90, in wind, rain, snow, ice, sleet, hail, or exposure to direct sunlight or hot pavement.

This does not prevent someone from allowing dogs in their yard. They simply must take common sense steps to ensure the dog has available shelter in the yard in case of harsh weather.

While animals are considered property under the law, they are living feeling beings. They suffer in extreme weather.

Oscar's Law aims to prevent such suffering in Baltimore County. I urge you to afford this protection to animals throughout the state by passing SB 627.

Thank you.

## **MoCo\_Morningstar\_FWA\_SB 627**

Uploaded by: Morningstar, Sara

Position: FWA



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

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**SB 627**

**DATE: March 10, 2020**

**SPONSOR: Senator Kramer, *et al.***

**ASSIGNED TO: Judicial Proceedings**

**CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar ([Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov))**

**POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT (Montgomery County Department of Police)**

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### **Crimes – Unattended Dogs in Extreme Weather Conditions**

Senate Bill 627 would prohibit a person from leaving a dog outside and unattended for longer than 30 minutes without access to continuous “suitable shelter” during “extreme weather conditions.” Violators would be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to imprisonment for up to 90 days and/or a maximum fine of \$1,000.

Reports of animals being left outside in extreme weather conditions have led State and local governments across the country to enact laws and regulations that penalize pet owners for animal cruelty. While some long-haired and thick-coated dog breeds are bred for colder climates, all dogs are susceptible to frostbite and hypothermia in below-freezing weather. And, in the summer, high temperatures, combined with humidity, can cause dogs to suffer dehydration and heatstroke.

The Montgomery County Department of Police supports the goal of this legislation – to protect animals from extreme weather conditions. However, the Department respectfully requests that the bill be amended to allow the County to continue to follow extreme weather standards adopted in 2017 as Executive Regulation 17-17 – Anti-cruelty Conditions for Dogs – as well as those established under the County’s comprehensive Emergency Weather Plan. Both standards provide dog owners with clear guidance about space, shelter, and protection requirements for their animals, and, in fact, put the County in a better position to enforce anti-cruelty regulations than those proposed under SB 627.

For that reason, the Montgomery County Department of Police supports SB 627 with the proposed amendment and respectfully urges the Committee to adopt a favorable report.