

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.