



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**SB 925**

**DATE: March 3, 2020**

**SPONSOR: Senators Ready and Hough**

**ASSIGNED TO: Judicial Proceedings**

**CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (sara.morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: OPPOSE (Montgomery County Department of Police)**

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### **Criminal Law – Dangerous and Potentially Dangerous Dogs – Classification and Requirements**

Senate Bill 925 rewrites sections of the Criminal Law Article pertaining to the classification of “dangerous dogs” and the actions that may or must be taken under specific circumstances. For a number of reasons, the Montgomery County Department of Police opposes this bill.

To begin, language in SB 925 provides for the removal of a dangerous dog classification if there are no incidences for one year. This arbitrary passage of time may not be a reliable indicator that there will not be reoccurrences. Several cases in Montgomery County have proven this point. In addition, language in the bill implies that the purpose of confinement and restraint methods proposed are punitive measures rather than measures to protect others from the potentially dangerous dog. The Department is also concerned that an animal control unit would be liable should the removal of the classification be found to be arbitrary or not based on substantial fact.

The bill also requires that a dog’s upbringing be factored in during the classification process. This seems subjective and arbitrary and therefore may not be good predictor of a dog’s future behavior. Finally, SB 925 references “a responsible pet ownership program.” No guidelines for such a program are described in the bill.

In summary, for the aforementioned reasons and others not described above, the Montgomery County Department of Police opposes SB 925 and would urge the Committee to adopt an unfavorable report on the bill.