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District 13

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL HB0016: Crimes - Unattended Dogs - Extreme Weather
Conditions and Heat

1/13/2022

TO: Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation
Committee

FROM: Ayla Hurley

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, my name is Ayla Hurley, and I live in Columbia, District 13. This testimony is in support of Bill HB0016.

Every place I have lived since childhood, be it a single-family home neighborhood, apartment, or townhome, from Annapolis to Rockville to Columbia, has had some instance of a dog left outside in the cold winter months. Typically I am forcefully made aware of these poor creatures because they will bark incessantly.

In at least two locations I've lived, calling Animal Control only got me so far to help the animal - they told me they could only do something if the dog was still outside by the time they arrived. It didn't matter if this was a regularly documented occurrence at the same location. Not only is this outright cruel to the animals suffering this treatment, but the other humans living in those spaces are having their quality of life disrupted. A mother who desperately needs her newborn to nap, a night-shift worker who hasn't slept well in days, or any one of us stuck home during a COVID quarantine - listening to a dog stuck outside in the cold or heat that we have no recourse to help borders on inhumane living conditions.

But the genuinely inhumane treatment of animals left to suffer, frequently requiring medical treatment, should be held as a criminal offense and treated as what it is - animal abuse.

I urge the committee to support SB0044 to protect these animals, and the people living near but unable to help them