



March 01, 2022

Maryland General Assembly
Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee

RE: SB815 – Non-Economic Damages

Chairman Smith, Jr. and Committee Members,

Animal Policy Group works with clients across the entire animal welfare community, including veterinary, animal health products, and pet care service providers, such as groomers and boarders. We represent over 70,000 professionals dedicated to the well-being of our pets.

We all appreciate the sentiment behind bills like SB815. Pets are an important part of our lives. However, setting a new legal precedent by allowing for the recovery of noneconomic damages would have a detrimental effect on animal welfare that would ripple across the country for decades to come. Mainly, increased financial risks will result in skyrocketing insurance premiums, as we have seen in human medicine with premiums often exceeding \$200,000, per year. Those that cannot afford insurance will face financial ruin if there is an accident. Veterinary clinics, animal rescues, grooming salons, boarding facilities, pet trainers, dog walkers, etc. will be put out of business, at a time when they are in more demand than ever before.

All of this will come at the expense of providing additional damages for very few incidents, each year. And it will not erase those events. Maryland already has laws against animal cruelty. We encourage strengthening these laws and focusing on other areas that can improve animal welfare and prevent these events from ever happening.

We thank you for your time and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Scott Young
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