



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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March 8, 2022

To: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Criminal Law – Animal Cruelty- Petition for Costs of Care of Seized Animal- SB 877
-Support

Chairman Smith, Vice Chairman Waldstreicher, members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov and I am the President and Chairman of the Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc. We champion legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. On behalf of our board of directors, as well as the thousands of members of Maryland Votes for Animals, I respectfully ask that this committee vote favorably for Criminal Law – Animal Cruelty- Petition for Costs of Care of Seized Animal- SB 877.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Senator Ready, who for years was both a sponsor of this legislation and a member of JPR for so graciously passing along this important bill to Vice Chair Waldstriecher.

This bill establishes procedures to authorize an officer, agent of a humane society, a police officer, or certain other public official to recover reasonable costs of care from the owner or custodian of a certain seized animal. Most states *already* have costs of care laws, including Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware, and West Virginia. SB 877/HB 1062 provides relief for animal control agencies and shelters facing fiscal challenges, as well as Maryland taxpayers, who should not be financially responsible for the animals seized in a cruelty case. Additionally, this bill allows for those seized animals, if determined by their owner to be too much of a financial burden, to be adopted into loving homes – instead of waiting months or years – for the case to be decided.

How often do we get to pass legislation that is both compassionate and fiscally responsible? *This bill is both.* By establishing a uniform system, all parties, including the accused, the animals, and the animal control agencies are protected.

I would like to thank Senator Waldstreicher for his sponsorship of this bill and urge a favorable report.

