



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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April 6, 2022

To: House Judiciary Committee

From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.

Re: Public Safety- Fire and Rescue- Veterinary Care of Retired Fire and Rescue K -9's- SB 38 - Support

Chairman Clippinger, Vice – Chairman Moon, members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chairman of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Judicial Proceedings Committee vote favorably for Public Safety- Fire and Rescue- Veterinary Care of Retired Fire and Rescue K -9's- SB 38.

This bill requires that State or local fire and rescue entities to reimburse individuals who take possession of dogs formerly used in fire and rescue work under a written agreement for reasonable and necessary veterinary treatment not to exceed \$2,500 per year. It also permits State fire and rescue entities to accept certain donations and requiring that the donations be disbursed to that fund as well as authorizing local fire and rescue entities to establish a separate fund to accept public donations for the payment of certain veterinary expenses.

Senator Kramer's 2021 bill, SB 156 Public Safety - Law Enforcement - Veterinary Care of Retired Law Enforcement K-9s Acts, required certain State and local law enforcement agencies to reimburse people who adopt retired law enforcement dogs for veterinary expenses and established The Compassionate Care Fund. That bill passed unanimously in the Senate 45-0 and in the House 134-0. This bill, Public Safety- Fire and Rescue- Veterinary Care of Retired Fire and Rescue K-9's -SB 38 expands the categories of dogs covered by the bill to include dogs used in fire and rescue operations.

Fire and rescue dogs are employed during some of the most dangerous emergency situations, from house fires to natural disasters, explosions, and more. Therefore, the injuries that these brave and highly trained dogs might sustain could not only be life- threatening, but if they are fortunate enough to survive, might require significant veterinary expenses years after the injury. This bill would help to cover those costs for families who are willing to take in a dog who has paid its debt to society. In addition, extending the ability of fire and rescue organizations to accept donations to for The Compassionate Care Fund would further support veterinary care that these dogs receive.

This bill is a win- win. It is a win for the caring person or family who adopts a fire or rescue dog and a win for that dog who gets to live out its golden years in a loving home with support for veterinary care after sacrificing so much to serve our greater community.

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Kramer for sponsoring SB 38 and urge a favorable report.

