

**HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY**  
**IN SUPPORT OF**  
**SB 72 - INCOME TAX - CREDIT FOR PET-FRIENDLY RENTAL**  
**DWELLING UNITS**

**Senate Budget & Taxation Committee**  
**January 19, 2023**



**Health Care for the Homeless supports SB 72**, which would create a nonrefundable credit against the State income tax for a landlord who permits a tenant to reside with a “companion animal.” Emotional support animals assist many of our clients in coping with their symptoms of disabilities as it relates to the stress of social interactions. A wider range of housing options, as this bill intends, would be hugely beneficial to these clients.

Health Care for the Homeless has a number of clients that have trouble finding pet-friendly rentals. Having a pet can do great things to improve mood and the ability for more clients to have pets in their homes would be a huge benefit to them. There is extensive professional literature concerning the therapeutic benefits of assistance animals for people with disabilities such as that experienced by many of the clients we serve. Many of our clients have disabilities due to mental illness and companion animals allow them to cope with stress in order to help them function on a daily basis. As such, many of our providers recommend an emotional support for their clients. If a client has certain limitations regarding social interactions, our providers have prescribed emotional support animals to help alleviate these difficulties. As our clients already experience homelessness or housing insecurity, being limited to housing options, on top of being denied the ability to better cope with mental illness, is hugely problematic for our clients.

We have seen the benefits that emotional support animals bring for many of our clients with disabilities. As such, we support HB 681 as a measure to expand the housing options for clients in need of emotional support animals. While we believe a tax credit is a strong and timely solution, we understand that this committee and the House may feel more comfortable moving the bill as a task force, and we would support that change as well.

421 Fallsway  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
phone:410-837-5533  
fax: 410-837-8020  
[www.hchmd.org](http://www.hchmd.org)  
[@hchomeless](https://twitter.com/hchomeless)

**Everyone deserves to go home.**