



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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January 19, 2023

To: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chairman, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Income Tax – Credit for Pet-Friendly Rental Dwelling Units – SB 72- Support

Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chairman Rosapepe, members of the Senate Budget and Taxation 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 Senate Budget and Taxation Committee vote favorably for Income Tax - Credit for Pet-Friendly Rental Units - SB 72.

This bill would provide a tax credit for landlords who adopt pet-friendly leasing policies. While landlords may impose restrictions on the number of companion animals residing with a tenant, they may not impose non-refundable pet fees or have breed or size restrictions on companion animals residing with the tenant. In addition to claiming this tax credit, landlords will provide a list of residential properties with pet-friendly policies. The Comptroller will keep an updated list of the landlords and properties in our state.

Finding affordable housing has been an issue for renters with pets. With Covid exacerbating weaknesses in the housing market, it is time to take a tangible step to help people who face housing insecurity. Often when confronted with these problems, the proposed solutions are in the form of regulations and/or penalties. This bill is unique in that it creates a pilot program that operates by offering an incentive, but not a mandate. The hope is that the program will become popular not only with pet owners in search of pet-friendly apartments, but also with landlords, who will enjoy both tax credits and potentially increased revenue as their policies attract the pet friendly community to rent in their properties.

While we believe that the tax credit approach would be an efficient and effective solution to this problem, we would support moving this bill as a task force if this committee and the House see this route as the most feasible way to find a solution to this problem engage the opinions of all stakeholders.

Thank you to Senator Jackson for introducing this bill. I urge a favorable report for SB 72.