

KAREN LEWIS YOUNG  
*Legislative District 3*  
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Committee on Education, Energy,  
and the Environment



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 15th, 2023

**SB 390 Provision of Veterinary Services - Routine Medical Care and Rabies Vaccines**

Chairman Brian Feldman  
Education, Energy and Environment Committee  
11 Bladen Street  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB390, which expands veterinary services in the State of Maryland in two ways: (1) it would allow for out-of-state veterinarians who are in the process of obtaining a Maryland license to perform rabies vaccinations, diagnostics, testing and wellness exams; and (2) it would allow vet techs to administer rabies vaccines under certain conditions.

There is a well-documented veterinary shortage across the United States. A recent national study from the largest veterinary provider in the country, estimates that by 2030 there will be 15,000 fewer veterinarians than are needed to care for the nation's pets, leaving as many as 75 million people without veterinary care.

The shortage of care is especially true for animal shelters. Most of the municipal and county animal shelters in our state do not have veterinarians on staff and rely on either the complete availability of visiting volunteer veterinarians to perform routine medical care or fight with the general population to be seen at over capacity clinics.

The expansion of who can offer rabies vaccines and routine care will address the length of time that animals have to stay in shelters, and help get rescued animals into their forever homes instead of languishing in the limited space in our shelters.

For example, in Queen Anne's County, at one shelter, the veterinarian is only in twice a week which increases the length of stay in many cases. As a rescue mom, I can attest to the importance of human contact and how a long stay can negatively impact their personality and ability to be adopted.

Note that licensed vet techs in Maryland already administer other vaccinations. In addition, other states do this: 15 out of the 40 states that have a statewide requirement for rabies vaccination of companion animals allow for rabies vaccines to be administered by non-veterinarians. This includes the District of Columbia. Having trained techs giving rabies vaccines would free up time for veterinarians to focus on higher level care.

I have been working closely with stakeholders on the concerns they have raised and I have an amendment which reaches a very reasonable compromise.

SB390 is a vital and necessary step to proactively address the care gap for Maryland pets, relieve pressure on strained animal sheltering organizations, and promote public health.

I respectfully urge a favorable report.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Karen Lewis Young