

JEN TERRASA
Legislative District 13
Howard County

Environment and Transportation
Committee

House Chair

Joint Committee on Children,
Youth, and Families



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 15, 2023

To: The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Delegate Jen Terrasa
District 13, Howard County

Re: Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB325 Provision of Veterinary Services -
Routine Medical Care and Rabies Vaccines

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB325, which expands veterinary services in the State of Maryland in two ways: (1) it would allow for out of state veterinarians to provide routine medical care to animals in shelter including spaying and neutering, vaccinations, health exams, and completing of health certificates; and (2) would allow vet techs to administer rabies vaccines.

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 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 foster 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.

Senator Karen Lewis-Young and I have been working closely with stakeholders on the concerns they have raised, and I believe there will be an amendment coming out of those discussions.

HB325 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.