



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 24, 2023

**Support of SB 390/ HB0325 - Provision of Veterinary Services - Practice of Veterinary
Medicine and Rabies Vaccines**

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland Senate
11 Bladen Street, Room 302
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, and Esteemed Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB390, which expands veterinary services in the State of Maryland in two ways: (1) it would require the State Board of Veterinary Medicine to develop an expedited process for out-of-state veterinarians to obtain a Maryland license; and (2) it would authorize the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners to issue a license to an animal control facility 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 compete 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 staff approved to administer rabies vaccines would free up time for veterinarians to focus on higher level care.

We have worked closely with stakeholders on the concerns they have raised and the bill that I am presenting to you achieves a 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.



Senator Karen Lewis Young