



## THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

March 29, 2023

Environment and Transportation Committee

SB390

*Provision of Veterinary Services – Routine Medical Care and Rabies Vaccines*

### FAVORABLE AS AMENDED

The Humane Society of the United States, on behalf of our members and supporters in Maryland, urges a favorable report and speedy action on SB390. This bill would make two changes to allow our shelter partners to access critical veterinary care – enabling shelters to better serve communities and animals.

This committee worked diligently with the sponsors and stakeholders to amend the bill as introduced and create a workable solution that advances the goals of the advocates while acknowledging practical implementation concerns. While the bill was moving in the House, one final amendment was suggested that makes the bill stronger by expanding oversight by the State Veterinary Board over the new authority to administer rabies vaccines. This language was adopted by the Senate and **we urge the ENT committee to pass the Senate Bill as amended to include this provision.** We will work to ensure that the Senate adds the same language to the House bill, which you have already moved.

The veterinary shortage is impacting pet owners everywhere, but nowhere is the need more critical than for our shelters. Maryland must expand the basic services that vet techs and out of state vets can provide shelters. Essentials such as rabies vaccines, health exams, and diagnostic testing are the most widely needed services that shelters provide animals and communities. The inability to access veterinary care to provide these services causes delays in the ability of shelters to care for, and adopt out, the animals in their care.

Many shelters do not have veterinarians on staff, or do not have full-time veterinarians working for them. This causes meaningful delays in providing care and can delay the shelter's ability to release adoptable animals to partnering rescues or new adoptive homes. Expanding the availability of rabies vaccines and allowing out of state vets to administer basic care procedures would ease these burdens tremendously.

The impact of the veterinary shortage on our shelters is real and translates into longer stays for adoptable animals; an inability to provide services such as rabies vaccines to residents in our communities; and allowing the limited veterinary staff shelters can afford to employ to focus on more complex health cases.

We appreciate the engagement from stakeholders and the sponsors in refining the legislation and drafting a bill that will be an effective and a working solution for all parties. We urge a favorable report on SB390 as amended in the Senate.

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