

Senate Bill 279

TO: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

DATE: February 8, 2023

FROM: Caroline A. Griffin, Esquire *ef*

RE: **SB 279 – Real Property – Actions for Possession – Pet Protections**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

Chairman Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee. My name is Caroline A. Griffin; I am an attorney and reside in Baltimore City. I served as Chair of the Baltimore Mayor's Anti-Animal Abuse Advisory Commission from 2009 – 2013 and currently chair the Maryland Spay Neuter Advisory Board. I am the co-founder of the non-profit Show Your Soft Side, a national anti-cruelty campaign, and currently serve on the Board of the Animal Welfare Institute. I support SB 279 – Real Property – Actions for Possession – Pet Protections.

SB 279 codifies best practices for protecting animals during an eviction. While the Baltimore Sheriff's Office has implemented these practices and contacts BARCS Animal Shelter to take possession of animals during an eviction, this policy is not enforced uniformly. Accordingly, legislation is needed, even in jurisdictions where agencies have taken steps to prevent animal abandonment during evictions.

On January 6, 2022, a citizen contacted my non-profit, Show Your Soft Side, seeking assistance following a family member's eviction from an apartment on Frederick Road in Baltimore City. The citizen reported that 3 cats were left in the apartment and that neither the deputy sheriff nor the landlord allowed the tenant to retrieve her cats. We instructed the citizen to contact Baltimore City Animal Control, who removed the animals the following day. *A copy of this Service Request is attached.* Fortunately, in this instance, a concerned citizen notified the authorities; many animals are not so lucky.

Abandoned animals endure extreme suffering. Six years ago, Baltimore Raven Ronnie Stanley, an ambassador in the Show Your Soft Side campaign, adopted his dog Lola from BARCS Animal Shelter. Lola, who was found locked inside a room of an empty house without food or water, attempted to eat through a wall to escape. As forensic veterinarian Martha Smith-Blackmore notes in an upcoming book:

Animals enclosed in spaces without access to food may pace or dig or chew at corners, walls, window frames or doorways out of frustration, hunger or in an attempt to escape, leaving claw or chew marks from their efforts. Animals in late-stage starvation will be too weak to stand or reposition themselves, and the skin may be more vulnerable to trauma. These animals may suffer from pressure sores over bony prominences, urine scald or flystrike with maggot activity.¹

Baltimore City Animal Control regularly responds to service requests in response to citizens who have abandoned animals at former residences. Animals are found both dehydrated and emaciated, and tragically, deceased at times. Animals that survive after being abandoned for several days or weeks require extensive veterinary care, which our municipal animal shelters – and ultimately taxpayers – must pay.

Aside from preventing enormous suffering, SB 279 is common sense legislation that ultimately saves taxpayer dollars by reducing the burdens on municipal shelters. I urge you to issue a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,



Caroline A. Griffin, Esquire

8 February 2023
Date

ⁱ Investigating Animal Abuse Crime Scenes: A Field Guide, CRC Press/Taylor and Francis Group by Drs. Virginia Maxwell and Martha Smith-Blackmore. Dr. Maxwell is a professor at the University of New Haven's Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Science. Dr. Smith-Blackmore was a Visiting Fellow at the Harvard Law School's Brooks McCormick Jr. Animal Law & Policy Program in 2022.

Service Request Summary Report

22-00013327

Printed Date: Feb 23, 2022 - 8:37:27 AM

Type: HLTH-Animal In
 Danger/Injured/Abused/Neglected
Created By: Lynne Hellman
Service Request Owner: HLTH_ANIMAL
Method Received: Phone
SLA Detail: 3 Business Days

SR #: 22-00013327
Priority: Urgent
Status: Closed
Status Date: Jan 07, 2022 11:38:17 AM
Created Date: Jan 06, 2022 5:28:54 PM
Overdue on: Jan 11, 2022 5:28:54 PM
Closed on: Jan 07, 2022 11:38:17 AM

Location: 4119 FREDERICK AVE, Baltimore City,
 21229

Location Details:

Description: apartment 3 the owner of the apartment is jenifer jones her address is 3818 park heights 443 414 -4092

Service Questions

Questions	Answers
This service request is to be used for domestic animals only (e.g. dogs, cats, etc.). Is this concern about a domestic animal?	Yes
Is the animal trapped in a vacant building?	Yes
What is happening to the animal?	citizen said the tenants were evicted yesterday citizen said the landlord refused to let them retrieve their cats citizen said there are 3 cats they have been in there since yesterday with no food or water
Is the animal suffering or in immediate danger of death?	Do not know
Have you called the police?	No
Where is the animal precisely located?(e.g., inside, outside, street address, intersection, business name, etc.):	inside apartment #3
What type of animal?	cats
What is the size of the animal?	Medium (tri-cycle)
What color is the animal?	tabby
List any distinguishing features (e.g., stripes,spots, patches, scar, missing limb, etc.):	
Do you know the animal's owner?	Yes
Owner's name?	joann koros
Describe the owner:	5'2" average height
Is the owner present/at home?	

Contact Information

Name	Address	Email	Phones/Extensions
cynthia murray		locketsbyangel@gmail.com	+1 (443) 604-7112

Service Activities

Activity Name	Status	Assigned To	Outcome	Outcome Reason	Finish Date
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Service Response	Complete	Jessica Novak	Work completed	Resolved	1/7/2022 11:34 AM
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Resolution Questions

Service Activity	Resolution Question	Resolution Answer
Service Response	Is this a Neglect or Cruelty case?	

Comments

Comment	Comment By	Created Date
Service Response : AEO Novak/Genis on 1/7/22 at 1115am, p/u three cats from eviction that happened on 1/5/21. Owner, Joann Koros (410-651-4270) was on scene and would like cats back once she finds a place to live. Cats are "Baby Girl", "Patches" and "Nippy" (all DSH, gray/white). "Baby Girl" does have matts on her back. Owner was given BARCS number to call about the KPWF program.	Jessica Novak	1/7/2022 11:38 AM

Related Child Service Requests

Related Parent Service Requests

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