



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

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February 13, 2024

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.
Re: Wildlife - Traveling Animal Acts – Prohibition – SB 547- Support

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chair of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Wildlife - Traveling Animal Acts – Prohibition-SB 547.

This bill would prohibit a person from allowing for the participation of a bear, a cougar, an elephant, a jaguar, a leopard, a lion, a nonhuman primate, a tiger, or a hybrid of any of these animals in a traveling animal act.

The leaders in the circus industry have changed their models and eliminated the use of wild animals in their performances. They recognize that quality entertainment that will amuse adults and delight children of all ages does not need to depend on a system where animals are taken from their native homes and subjected to the rigors of travel confined in small cages. By passing this bill, Maryland would basically be keeping up with the market to protect elephants, bears, tigers, and other wild animals from a lifetime of performing in captivity.

As [reported by the Baltimore Sun](#), on the front page above the fold this past November, the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus returned to Baltimore after a 6-year hiatus with new acts such as a robotic dog. Their goal was to charm audiences as they had for many years without the use of wild animals. One of my Maryland Votes for Animals board members took her 12-year-old to the show to see what he thought of the new format. She called as soon as the show was over from the car and said that he loved it. Since I know her son, I spoke with him right after the show. He said that the performance was incredible, especially the robotic dog!

Let's ensure that Maryland continues to be a place where our citizens can enjoy live performances without subjecting these animals to a life confined in small cages for long periods of travel and away from their fellow species.

Thanks to Senator Elfreth for sponsoring SB 547. I urge the committee for a favorable report.