



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 379 – Wildlife – Traveling Animal Acts – Prohibition

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, Members of Environment and Transportation –

Over the last decade, the public has become increasingly aware of and opposed to the abusive treatment of animals used in traveling circuses and shows. These wild creatures are trained through pain, fear, and punishment; suffer due to inadequate veterinary care; and endure extreme confinement for prolonged periods. Not only is the use of wild animals in traveling acts inhumane, but it also poses safety and health risks for circusgoers and animal handlers alike.

Some circuses and shows (including Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey and UniverSoul) have responded to public sentiment by reconceptualizing their entertainment in a compassionate, animal-free model. However, other circus acts (Loomis Bros. Circus as an example) continue to travel across the U.S. (including Maryland) forcing wild animals such as bears, big cats, elephants, and nonhuman primates to perform in ways that defy their nature and lead to the possibility of injuring attendees and spreading disease¹.

HB 379 will end this animal cruelty and the related public health and safety risks by prohibiting the use of elephants, nonhuman primates, bears, lions, tigers, leopards (excluding clouded leopards), jaguars, and any of their hybrids in acts that travel to Maryland to perform. The bill does not affect exhibits at zoos or other permanent establishments as long as the named animals are not transported offsite or brought to the facility for performance purposes. When the legislation becomes law, Maryland will join 8 other states and more than 150 localities (including Montgomery County and Gaithersburg) in 37 states restricting or banning wild animals in traveling circuses and shows².

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 567.

¹ [Federal Circus Bill, Public Health & Safety](#)

² [Prohibiting Circuses and Traveling Acts that Use Animals](#), Animal Legal Defense Fund