

My name is Susan Sturla (and this is Halle). I am one of many who has been impacted by this cap...one of which needs to be repealed...Always Remember "Wrong is Wrong". This repeal will make offenders responsible for their wrongful actions and bring fairness to the innocent victim. By law, people who cause harm or death to a beloved pet must be held accountable and not limited to a cap. Anyone who owns a pet knows the value of their faithful companionship. They truly are "Mans Best Friend". Our furry children are NOT household items or property. They ARE a living, breathing creature made from God just like you and me.

I have experienced first hand being a victim of this cap. My tragedy began on January 1, 2021.

Sophia, my beautiful Pomeranian child" was on her ESA harness and leash taking a morning walk with my friend, Bob. It was 7am on New Years Day morning, a day we thought we would be celebrating the New Year. However, my entire world changed and to this day my heart still mourns for my best furry friend. From out of nowhere, a pitbull rushed out of the house next door and attacked Sophia on Bob's property. The pitbull was known to be unfriendly, as stated in the Humane Society report, to other dogs. The pitbull was not wearing a leash nor was there a human owner with the pitbull to control its actions. Maryland law requires a dog to be on a leash at all times in order to be controlled by its owner.

I heard Sophia yelping and Bob screaming so I ran out of Bob's house to see what was happening. Bob lives on a second- floor apartment house and on my way to them I fell down some stairs. I could not believe what was happening, but Sophia needed me. I'm her mom and I will always be there for her. (Including right now). She has been my best 12 years, 9 months and 9 days of my life. The pitbull had her pinned down and I did my very best to try to lift that dog off my Sophia as well as unlock the teeth out of Sophia's tummy.

I could not believe this was actually happening, but I just kept trying to save her. Good Samaritans came over to help me and I heard them say "just stab it she needs help." Then they left and I didn't get a chance to thank them. I did notice the male pitbull owner was outside at this time when all of this was going on and I could hear him say "oh my God, oh my God." The pitbull owner did nothing to control his dog in this vicious attack.

I told Bob to go get my keys so we could take Sophia to the vet ER on route 140. However, being New Year's morning, they were not open. I drove to Carroll County Hospital hoping they could help me with Sophia but she had died in my arms.

The hospital took me back to examine me. I was covered in blood. I was bruised and the right side of my body took some damage. I did not need any surgery, but my back required physical therapy. I had multiple bites and my left finger is still numb. Because the pitbull did not have any vet paper work and was euthanized, I had to receive 4 rounds of rabies shots.

The flashbacks and anxiety are at times unbearable, but I keep moving forward. Halle (my service dog) has been a God send to me. She has provided me with the care and affection that I need from my heartfelt loss.

Everyday Sophia is in my thoughts and in my heart. This unexpected, tragic experience should have never happened to us and I wish this trauma on no one.