



**Maryland's Association of Animal Care and Control
Agencies and Humane Societies**

**PO Box 1143
Easton, Maryland 21601**

**SB0017 – Criminal Law- Crimes Relating to Animals- Conviction and Sentencing
Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

January 26, 2024

Dear Honorable Chairman Smith, Vice-Chairman Waldstreicher, and members of the committee:

Professional Animal Workers of Maryland, the state organization comprised of animal control agencies and humane societies unanimously supports and encourages a favorable and speedy report on SB0017.

Felony cases related to animals are the most egregious we see in humane law enforcement. These cases involve acts of aggravated cruelty to animals including but not limited to cruelly beating, torturing, mutilating, sexual contact, killing of an animal, dog fighting and cock fighting. Often in these cases there is more than one victim- animal- which has been harmed. As the current law stands, whether a defendant harms 1 animal or 100 animals, the charges and hence sentencing would be the same.

SB0017 acts to correct a change which occurred at a meeting of the Maryland Sentencing Commission last May. We understand the legislature's work to decrease incarceration in Maryland. These cases are not frequent occurrences, however when they do occur, they are truly horrific crimes. Animals are caught in a legal dilemma; they are technically property, but as these crimes very often result in the loss of life, it is insufficient to limit felony charges in the same manner we would a vehicle, a TV and such.

Professional Animal Workers of Maryland believes the passing of this bill is a crucial tool in protecting the animals and people of Maryland.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Patty Crankshaw-Quimby, CAWA

Executive Director/Chief Animal Control Officer: Talbot Humane/ Talbot County Animal Control

President: Professional Animal Workers of Maryland