



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

**PO Box 1143  
Easton, Maryland 21601**

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**SB0017 – Criminal Law- Crimes Relating to Animals- Conviction and Sentencing  
Maryland House of Delegates Judiciary Committee**

**March 22, 2024**

**Dear Honorable Chairman Clippinger, Vice-Chair Bartlett, 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.

Cases which rise to the level of prosecution are the most egregious we see in humane law enforcement. These cases involve acts of hoarding, 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.

We support the bill as amended by the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee; that amendment strengthened the bill by directly addressing the Sentencing Commission decision. We appreciate the work put in by the sponsor to identify alternative language that satisfies the goal of the floor amendment, and we ask this committee to move the bill with this revised amendment included.

As I had the opportunity to share when I testified before you on the house version of this bill, these cases are not everyday occurrences, however when they do occur, they are 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