



Formerly called the Humane  
Society of the United States and  
Humane Society International

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**February 25, 2025**

**Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**SB 896**

***Pet Policy Disclosure (Pet Policy Transparency Act)***

**FAVORABLE**

Humane World for Animals, formerly called the Humane Society of the United States, on behalf of our members and supporters in Maryland, offers enthusiastic support for SB896. This bill simply requires all rental units to make their pet policies accessible for prospective tenants and improve transparency in the rental housing market.

According to a recent survey by Zillow, 59% of renters are pet owners. While it is common for renters to make compromises about location, the number of bedrooms, or the cost of a unit, pet owners are less likely to make compromises when it comes to their pets.

Renters with pets face significant challenges in finding suitable housing because it can be difficult to obtain clear and accessible information about a property's pet policy. Renters must navigate through unclear or incomplete listings and spend valuable time contacting landlords or property managers to find out whether pets are allowed or what specific restrictions exist. This is particularly the case for affordable housing. When reviewing rental listings on the Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition's directory, we found that of four hundred listings 67- less than 17%- indicated they accepted pets. Of those, approximately 47% required a prospective tenant to call for more details.

These patterns are not unique to Maryland. A recent study takes a qualitative approach to examine the challenges that tenants face in finding and maintaining affordable housing that welcomes pets, focusing on their experiences and the barriers they encounter<sup>1</sup>. A key finding was the importance of clear, written pet policies that are easily accessible to the public. This will help both tenants and landlords manage expectations and responsibilities. The study further suggests that many tenants experience confusion or frustrations due to inconsistent or poorly defined pet policies, which can make it harder to find appropriate housing that will accommodate their family.

This new bill seeks to address these barriers, for prospective low-income and market rate tenants, by requiring landlords and property management companies to make their pet policies more



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visible and readily accessible. The goal is to create a smoother and timelier process for renters, allowing them to make more informed decisions and more easily find a property that is suitable for their families and pets.

For these reasons, Humane World for Animals respectfully urges a favorable vote for SB896.

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<sup>1</sup> Mascitelli, T.M. *et al.* (2024) *Barriers to finding and maintaining pet-inclusive affordable housing: Tenant experiences in Houston, Texas*, *Frontiers*. Available at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/veterinary-science/articles/10.3389/fvets.2024.1465682/full> (Accessed: 21 February 2025).