



Maryland Veterinary Medical Association (MDVMA)

Established in 1886, MDVMA is a volunteer, non-profit organization comprised primarily of licensed Maryland Veterinarians.

SB0581 - Civil Actions - Tortious Injury to or Death of Pet - Compensatory Damages

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

February 7, 2025

MDVMA Position: SUPPORT

On behalf of the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA), I am writing to express our strong support for the proposed Civil Actions - Tortious Injury to or Death of Pet - Compensatory Damages Bill currently under consideration in the Maryland legislature. As an organization that represents veterinarians throughout the state, we believe that this bill is a necessary step toward ensuring that pet owners are fairly compensated in the unfortunate event of injury or death of a pet caused by another party's negligence.

We recognize and appreciate the ongoing discussions around tort reform and understand the importance of balancing fair compensation with responsible legislation. This bill strikes an appropriate balance by providing reasonable damages for the injury or loss of a beloved pet, while also addressing the realities of increasing veterinary care costs in our state. With veterinary fees rising, it is only fitting that the potential payment for such claims be adjusted to reflect these increases. A maximum payment of \$25,000 is a reasonable amount that will provide appropriate compensation while ensuring that the potential for excessive litigation is kept in check.

Veterinarians play a crucial role in the health and well-being of pets, and we believe that it is vital for the law to recognize the emotional and financial impact that a pet's injury or death can have on its owners. In the same vein, we believe that owners should have a clear path to seek compensation when negligence or wrongful acts result in harm to their pets. This bill would provide clarity and justice to pet owners, while ensuring the preservation of responsible tort practices.

We urge you to support the passage of this bill, which will provide fair recourse for Maryland pet owners and ensure that the legislation remains relevant to the current realities of veterinary care and the associated costs.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, or if there is any further information the MVMA can provide, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely, Matthew Weeman, DVM, MS
Legislative Committee Chair
Maryland Veterinary Medical Association