

Unfavorable – HB1551 Written Testimony

Honorable Representatives of the State of Maryland:

I am writing you, asking you to vote no on HB 1551. Among the provisions is one that would require \$150 annual registration for all dog breeders in Maryland and a fee of \$50 for each puppy whelped. Responsible breeders preserving purebred dogs already have large expenses and do this out of the love of the breed and NOT to make money. Litters are planned and are few and far between. Responsible breeders will take back any dogs that owners decide are not a fit for their home - FOR ANY REASON. There are also breed specific rescues that will take purebred dogs and place them in their forever homes - NOT using the shelter resources.

Having a publicly accessible registry exposes the locations of breeders in Maryland and increases their risks of theft, harassment, and targets by extremists such as PETA. I have been to two local dog shows where PETA has shown up to release dogs from their enclosures, trying to create an at-large nuisance. This is NOT acceptable. These dogs get regular exercise, acupuncture, massage and other care - breeders do not need the additional pressure of their locations being made known and protestors showing up at their residence or worse, theft.

This House bill does not address the backyard breeders of mixed breed dogs - those that post a sign on the road that advertises and never do health screenings or pedigree research to ensure the best possible outcome for the puppies. This bill risks driving breeding underground even further to potentially unregulated or additional uninformed persons.

I would challenge the House to first do a study to better understand what is contributing to dogs being placed in Maryland shelters. My feeling is that study would reveal that mixed breed dogs are the ones ending up in shelters. Dogs from the example above for mixed breed dogs are likely bred without concern for the temperament of the litter and sold to households where that mix of breeds may not be a fit once the dogs start to mature and show tendencies of the breeds mixed. There is no evidence of a problem unless a study is done and data is presented showing where the shelter intake is coming from and addressing those contributing issues.

I understand the sponsor of this House bill is trying to address shelter population concerns; however, as written, this bill will not solve these concerns and creates unnecessary and expensive burdens on responsible breeders/hobbyists. I ask that you request a formal study be done prior to implementing this bill or any of the requirements therein. Decisions for addressing an issue, if found, should be based on that data.

Thank you for your time and consideration for this matter.

Kim Roberts
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Maryland born and raised