



Senate Bill 314

TO: Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

DATE: March 30, 2026

FROM: Caroline A. Griffin, Esquire 

RE: **SB 314 – Courts – Immunity From Liability – Donation of Pet Supplies**

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton, Members of the Committee, my name is Caroline Griffin, and I reside in Baltimore in Senator Attar's district. I am the co-founder of the non-profit **Show Your Soft Side (SYSS)**, a national anti-cruelty campaign that works with professional athletes and celebrities nationwide to demonstrate that compassion to animals is a strength. SYSS supports SB 314.

SYSS operates several programs that help vulnerable animals and people in Baltimore, a city that faces many challenges, including a staggering poverty rate of 20%, the highest in Maryland. SYSS has witnessed a surge in pet abandonment on Baltimore streets, which it attributes to sharp increases in the price of pet food and veterinary care, as well as to housing and economic insecurity.

Many Baltimore residents are desperate for pet food and supplies. SYSS relies on donations of these needed goods from manufacturers such as Chewy and Weruva, which SYSS redistributes to low-income individuals and community cat caretakers. Pet ownership should not be determined by zip code, and food distributions are often a remedy that enable struggling families to keep their pets.

Moreover, Maryland animal shelters have experienced a punishing surge in intake since 2021, according to statistics maintained by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Dog and cat intake at Maryland shelters totaled **61,516** in 2021; **69,607** in 2022; **75,369** in 2023; and **78,699** in 2024, representing nearly a twenty-eight percent (28%) increase in just three years (data for 2025 is

incomplete). These statistics reaffirm the ongoing capacity crisis that Maryland animal shelters face, which ultimately burdens taxpayers.

SB 314 would reduce waste and help supply shelters and non-profits with critically needed pet food and supplies. SYSS urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on this reasonable and common-sense bill, and also recommends that the Committee reject the canned written opposition from the Maryland Association of Justice (MAJ), which fails to address the merits of SB 314 whatsoever.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline A. Griffin
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