



**State Law Enforcement  
Officers Labor Alliance**  
542 Ritchie Highway  
Severna Park, Maryland 21146



April 2, 2026

The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
101 Taylor House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: SB 360 – Criminal Law – Emergency Response Animal – Prohibited Actions Against –  
SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

Dear Chair Bartlett:

The State Law Enforcement Labor Alliance (SLEOLA) is the exclusive representative for more than 1,700 active state law enforcement officers.

Senate Bill 360 defines emergency response animal, including search and rescue dogs, and clarifies the penalties for acts against both law enforcement and search and rescue animals. SLEOLA supports this proposal as it affords specific protections to animals that face the same risks as law enforcement officers do and are often the first ones sent into a dangerous situation as they protect their human officer and people in the community they serve.

Amendments were adopted to the cross-filed bill, House Bill 563, by the House Judiciary Committee that include adding a horse used in a search and rescue effort to the definition of emergency response animal; and adding the definition of “law enforcement unit” to the bill. SLEOLA supports these amendments.

SLEOLA also supports the amendments adopted by the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee providing that nothing prohibits a defendant from asserting the defense of necessity to a charge of violating this section of law; and clarify the affirmative defense of acting reasonably to prevent physical harm under §3-572 of the Public Safety Article of the Code.

The State Law Enforcement Labor Alliance asks the Committee for a Favorable with Amendments report for this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Brian Gill  
President

cc: Members, House Judiciary Committee