

January 20, 2021
Judicial Proceedings Committee

SB122
Crimes - Unattended Dogs in Extreme Weather Conditions

FAVORABLE

My name is Deborah Stone Hess. I chair the Baltimore County Animal Services Advisory Commission. Our Commission was created by the Baltimore County Council to advise on matters concerning Baltimore County Animal Services. That's our county-run shelter and Animal Control Division. About 5 thousand animals come through our shelter every year. On behalf of the Baltimore County Animal Services Advisory Commission, I request a favorable report on SB 122.

In 2018, the Baltimore County Council passed a bill virtually identical to SB 122. It's called Oscar's Law. It was created after a dog named Oscar died of hypothermia while lying in subfreezing temperatures in the snow in his Baltimore County yard.

Just think about it. Lying in the snow and freezing to death.

Baltimore County decided its citizens must be responsible for preventing such a tragedy by ensuring their animals have appropriate shelter from intense heat and cold.

Animals throughout our state deserve these protections and will receive them if SB 122 and its commonsense requirements are approved.

I imagine many of you may have pets and care for them deeply. Imagine if your pet was left to suffer and possibly even die in the freezing cold or terrible heat without any protection.

Pet owners have a responsibility to care for their animals and not place them in harm's way. Unfortunately some pet owners don't take these responsibilities seriously. With the passage of SB 122, they will be required to provide basic protections from extreme heat and cold so other animals don't die like Oscar did.

Please vote favorably for Senate Bill 122. By doing so, you will become a protector of helpless animals in the state of Maryland.