

MARYLAND STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

ANIMAL LAW SECTION

January 17, 2022

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., *Chair*
Senator Chris West
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Written Testimony of the Animal Law Section of the Maryland State Bar Association in support of SB 44

Dear Senator Smith, Senator West, and Committee Members:

The Animal Law Section of the Maryland State Bar Association supports the passing of SB 44 which prohibits a person from leaving a dog outside and unattended for longer than a certain period without access to certain suitable shelter or shade during certain weather conditions or temperatures.

Dogs provide a myriad of services to their human owners ranging from companionship to assistance with medical conditions. Dogs also provide many services to society at large such as assistance to law enforcement and search and rescue operations. While our companion and service animals are often happy to provide these services, we must always remember that unlike most other property, dogs are sentient beings that experience many of the same joys and suffering as people. Indeed, it is this sentience and sensitivity that make dogs such unmatched companions and intuitive service animals.

Due to this unique sentience, we have a responsibility to exercise compassion in the manner in which we treat and keep dogs. This legislation provides for essential protections against extreme temperatures that can cause severe suffering, injury, and even death to dogs. The responsibility of owning a dog should, at minimum, require the owner to protect the animal from the most universal dangers and the most unnecessary suffering.

Thank you for the time and consideration that you have dedicated to this written testimony, and the Animal Law Section of The Maryland State Bar Association is hopeful that you will vote in favor of SB 44.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'FG' with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Fernando Guerra, *Chair*
Animal Law Section of the Maryland State Bar Association