



2/14/22

Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in favor of H.B. 681. I would also like to thank Delegate Jones for introducing this important piece of legislation. My name is Katie Flory, and I am the Community Care & Advocacy Director for the Maryland SPCA. One of the biggest obstacles for people right now is finding pet friendly housing. According to our research 49% of families in Maryland have at least one pet. 20 % of the Maryland SPCA's surrender calls alone are housing related. H.B 681 would provide an incentive for property owners to allow pets into their properties while improving the lives of pets and people which is the Maryland SPCA's mission. We know there is not enough pet friendly housing to meet the number of pets in our community. This bill would help to increase the number of pet friendly housing while also supporting our state's property owners.

As a lifelong resident of Maryland and a private landlord, I can also speak to how this bill would be welcome to many property owners and help to break down barriers for people with pets looking for housing and landlords renting their properties. The last few years have showed us how many barriers there are to finding and keeping affordable housing not to mention how hard it is to find a home which allows pets. This bill is a win-win for the people and pets of Maryland. It would also greatly help our shelter system reduce the number of pets being surrendered due to housing issues and allow us to provide more resources to people looking for pet friendly housing.

Thank you for your time and I urge the Committee to give a favorable report of H.B. 681.