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SPEAKER PRO TEM
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The Maryland House of Delegates
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Delegate Dana Stein Testimony in Support of HB 1179

Housing and Community Development – Pets in Housing Developments

This legislation will improve access to rental housing for Maryland’s low-income pet owners and create more stable affordable housing communities by expanding pet-inclusive housing policies financed with the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LITHC) Program for residential properties.

Nearly three-fourths of renters have pets, but rental housing that is affordable and that will accept pets is hard to find—a problem that is compounded by arbitrary restrictions such as breed, weight, and number limits that create unnecessary barriers for pet-owning tenants. This legislation would require landlords of buildings that benefit from low-income housing tax credits to allow pets in their apartments. Landlords can still restrict the number of pets but cannot place arbitrary restrictions on the size or type of pets allowed.

To many people, their pets are family, and many would rather be homeless than give up their pet. When they must give them up, those pets end up in our animal shelters. One of the most commonly cited reasons pets are surrendered is because of a housing, moving, or landlord issues.

This bill will provide low-income renters with more housing options so they do not have to give up a beloved pet in order to rent.