

HOUSE BILL 563

E1

6lr0899
CF SB 360

By: ~~Delegates Behler and Cardin~~, Cardin, Valentine, Phillips, Stinnett, Simmons, McComas, Moreno, Arikan, Mangione, Moon, Conaway, and Woods

Introduced and read first time: January 28, 2026

Assigned to: Judiciary

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 7, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Criminal Law – Emergency Response Animal – Prohibited Actions Against**

3 FOR the purpose of repealing the prohibition against intentionally inflicting bodily harm,
4 permanent disability, or death on an animal owned or used by a law enforcement
5 unit; prohibiting a person from harassing, interfering with, injuring, or killing or
6 causing serious physical injury to an emergency response animal; and generally
7 relating to law enforcement animals.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

9 Article – Criminal Law

10 Section 10–606

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

13 BY adding to

14 Article – Criminal Law

15 Section 10–606.1

16 Annotated Code of Maryland

17 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

18 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

19 Article – Criminal Procedure

20 Section 10–101(a) and (g)

21 Annotated Code of Maryland

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 **10-606.1.**

2 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
3 INDICATED.

4 (2) "EMERGENCY RESPONSE ANIMAL" MEANS:

5 (I) A DOG USED BY A LAW ENFORCEMENT UNIT IN THE STATE
6 THAT IS TRAINED FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT WORK AND IS SUBJECT TO THE CONTROL
7 OF A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER WHO HAS COMPLETED HANDLER TRAINING IN
8 ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICIES OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT UNIT THAT EMPLOYS
9 THE OFFICER;

10 (II) A HORSE USED BY A LAW ENFORCEMENT UNIT IN THE STATE
11 FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT WORK; ~~OR~~

12 (III) A SEARCH AND RESCUE DOG TRAINED FOR OR ENGAGED IN
13 AN EFFORT DIRECTED BY A STATE AGENCY OR A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE
14 STATE TO LOCATE OR RESCUE A LOST, INJURED, OR DECEASED INDIVIDUAL; OR

15 (IV) A HORSE USED IN A SEARCH AND RESCUE EFFORT
16 DIRECTED BY A STATE AGENCY OR A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE STATE TO
17 LOCATE OR RESCUE A LOST, INJURED, OR DECEASED INDIVIDUAL.

18 (3) "LAW ENFORCEMENT UNIT" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN §
19 10-101 OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ARTICLE.

20 ~~(3)~~ (4) "SERIOUS PHYSICAL INJURY" MEANS PHYSICAL INJURY
21 THAT CAUSES PERMANENT OR PROTRACTED:

22 (I) DISFIGUREMENT;

23 (II) LOSS OF THE FUNCTION OF ANY BODILY MEMBER OR
24 ORGAN; OR

25 (III) IMPAIRMENT OF THE FUNCTION OF ANY BODILY MEMBER
26 OR ORGAN.

27 (B) ~~(1)~~ ~~A~~ EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF SELF-DEFENSE, A PERSON MAY NOT:

28 (1) INTENTIONALLY HARASS OR INTERFERE WITH AN EMERGENCY
29 RESPONSE ANIMAL DURING THE LAWFUL PERFORMANCE OF THE EMERGENCY
30 RESPONSE ANIMAL'S DUTIES;

