



To: Committee on General Laws, Subcommittee #2  
From: Animal Legal Defense Fund  
Re: Support Letter for HB 1614  
Date: January 19, 2023

Dear Chair Wampler and Subcommittee #2:

The Animal Legal Defense Fund is the nation's preeminent legal advocacy organization for animals and has been working for over four decades to protect the lives and advance the interests of animals through the legal system. On behalf of our thousands of members and supporters in Virginia, I respectfully ask that you support HB 1614, which would help keep pets and their families together by requiring that Virginia housing authorities permit tenants keep at least one common household pet in their dwelling unit.

Pet-inclusive housing helps prevent the surrendering of pets to animal shelters by eliminating a tenant's choice between finding a place to live and keeping their animal family members. Housing-related issues are the second highest reason for animal surrenders, and in 2021, over 970 cats and dogs were euthanized every day in shelters because these animals did not have a place to call home. By allowing tenants to keep pets in their home, families can stay together and continue to receive the companionship, comfort, and sense of security so often associated with our companion animals. Furthermore, pet-inclusive housing preserves a tenant's future choice to adopt a pet from a shelter without concern for their housing status to be compromised by choosing to have a pet.

Additionally, HB 1614 promotes pet-inclusive housing in a manner that does not jeopardize appropriate safety measures as it is subject to applicable laws and regulations on public health or safety, animal control, animal cruelty, and other reasonable conditions.

In sum, pet-inclusive housing allows tenants to avoid the incredibly difficult choice of having a home or keeping their companion animal family member. HB 1614 is a commonsense bill that will help keep pets with their families and prevent animal surrenders from housing-related issues. Please support this important legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

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