

SENATE BILL 1106

D2, E2

6lr3703

By: **Senators Simonaire, Astle, Cassilly, DeGrange, Jennings, Norman, Reilly, and Rosapepe**

Introduced and read first time: February 22, 2016

Assigned to: Rules

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Anne Arundel County and Harford County – Courthouse Dog and Child Witness**
3 **Pilot Program**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Courthouse Dog and Child Witness Pilot Program in
5 the circuit courts for Anne Arundel County and Harford County; establishing the
6 purpose of the pilot program; requiring the Administrative Office of the Courts to
7 develop a plan to implement the pilot program; requiring the Administrative Office
8 of the Courts to establish certain standards for participants in the program;
9 requiring the Administrative Office of the Courts to establish requirements that a
10 party in a certain proceeding must follow; requiring the Administrative Office of the
11 Courts to make information about the pilot program publicly available; requiring the
12 Administrative Office of the Courts to report annually to the Governor and General
13 Assembly; authorizing the Administrative Office of the Courts to adopt certain rules;
14 providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the Courthouse
15 Dog and Child Witness Pilot Program.

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

17 That:

18 (a) There is a Courthouse Dog and Child Witness Pilot Program in the circuit
19 courts for Anne Arundel County and Harford County.

20 (b) The purpose of the pilot program is to determine whether to establish a
21 structured, defined, and systematic approach for providing a courthouse dog to a child
22 witness in any circuit court proceeding in the State.

23 (c) To accomplish the purpose of the pilot program, the Administrative Office of
24 the Courts shall:

25 (1) develop a plan to implement the pilot program;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (2) establish minimum training standards for therapy and facility dogs
2 used in the pilot program;

3 (3) establish minimum standards for therapy and facility dog handlers who
4 participate in the program in court protocols and policies, including the expected role of an
5 animal assistance team and how not to interfere with evidence collection or the effective
6 administration of justice;

7 (4) establish the procedures that a party in a court proceeding must follow
8 to request that a therapy or facility dog assist a child witness; and

9 (5) ensure that the details of the pilot program are publicly available.

10 (d) On or before September 30, 2019, the Administrative Office of the Courts shall
11 report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article,
12 the General Assembly on the operation and results of the pilot program.

13 (e) The Administrative Office of the Courts may adopt rules to implement this
14 section.

15 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
16 October 1, 2016. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and, at the end of September
17 30, 2019, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be
18 abrogated and of no further force and effect.