

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 242

(Delegate Simonaire, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program Fund - Alteration of Program

This bill authorizes a designee of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to administer the Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program Fund and alters criteria for when a donor's name is published on the program's website.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. Funding for the program is not changed.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: By October 1, 2018, and annually thereafter, the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) must post and maintain on its website a list of all persons who have donated to the fund in the previous year and *have authorized MDVA to publish their names on its website.*

Current Law: Chapter 416 of 2017 established the Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program. The program is designed to refer eligible veterans to selected nonprofit organizations to be paired with "service dogs" or "support dogs," and facilitate their training. MDVA must select at least one nonprofit program that meets specified qualifications to carry out elements of the program.

Chapter 416 also established the Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program Fund, consisting of revenue collected by MDVA in the form of donations to the program, money appropriated in the State budget, and any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the fund. The fund must be administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Revenue from the fund may be used only to pay a nonprofit training entity and for administrative costs of the program. Expenditures from the fund may be made only in accordance with the State budget.

By October 1, 2018, and annually thereafter, MDVA must post and maintain on its website a list of individuals who have donated to the fund in the previous year and have not requested to remain anonymous.

Background: MDVA advises that regulations implementing the program went into effect December 18, 2017. As of January 2, 2018, the program had received approximately \$8,000 in donations. MDVA further advises that no training entities have been selected and no disbursements have been made from the fund.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 53 (Senator Simonaire) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 22, 2018
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