

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2018 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader - Revised**

Senate Bill 53

(Senator Simonaire)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

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**Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program Fund - Alteration of Program**

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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.

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**Fiscal Summary**

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**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.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 242 (Delegate Simonaire) - Health and Government Operations.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 9, 2018  
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