

SENATE BILL 124

D2

9lr1068

By: **Senator Simonaire**

Introduced and read first time: January 18, 2019

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

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

4 FOR the purpose of altering the name of a certain dog and child witness pilot program in
5 the circuit courts for Anne Arundel County and Harford County; extending the date
6 by which the Administrative Office of the Courts is required to provide a certain
7 report; extending the termination date of the pilot program; and generally relating
8 to the Court Dog and Child Witness Pilot Program.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
10 Chapter 467 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2016, as amended by Chapter
11 196 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2017
12 Section 1 and 2

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Chapter 467 of the Acts of 2016, as amended by Chapter 196 of the Acts of 2017**

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

18 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

19 (2) “Child witness” means a witness who is a minor when the witness
20 testifies in a court proceeding.

21 (3) “Facility dog” means a dog that has:

22 (i) graduated from a program of an assistance dog organization that
23 trains dogs for the purpose of reducing stress in a child witness;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (ii) received 2 years of training;

2 (iii) passed the same public access test as a service dog; and

3 (iv) been teamed with a facility dog handler.

4 (4) "Facility dog handler" means a person who has received training on:

5 (i) offering the person's animal for assistance purposes from an
6 organization accredited by Assistance Dogs International or an equivalent organization;
7 and

8 (ii) court protocol and policies, including the expected role of an
9 animal assistance team and how not to interfere with evidence collection or the effective
10 administration of justice.

11 (5) "Therapy dog" means a dog that has:

12 (i) received training to provide affection and comfort to children who
13 need emotional support; and

14 (ii) been teamed with a therapy dog handler.

15 (6) "Therapy dog handler" means a person who has received training on:

16 (i) offering the person's animal for assistance purposes from an
17 organization that insures, registers, or certifies therapy dogs and their handlers; and

18 (ii) court protocol and policies, including the expected role of an
19 animal assistance team and how not to interfere with evidence collection or the effective
20 administration of justice.

21 (b) There is a [Courthouse] **COURT** Dog and Child Witness Pilot Program in the
22 circuit courts for Anne Arundel County and Harford County.

23 (c) The purpose of the pilot program is to determine whether to establish a
24 structured, defined, and systematic approach for providing a [courthouse] **COURT** dog to a
25 child witness in any circuit court proceeding in the State.

26 (d) To accomplish the purpose of the pilot program, the Administrative Office of
27 the Courts shall:

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

29 (2) establish the procedures that a party in a court proceeding must follow
30 to request that a therapy dog and therapy dog handler or facility dog and facility dog

1 handler assist a child witness; and

2 (3) ensure that the details of the pilot program are publicly available.

3 (e) On or before [September 30, 2019,] **SEPTEMBER 30, 2021**, the
4 Administrative Office of the Courts shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with §
5 2–1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on the operation and results
6 of the pilot program.

7 (f) The Administrative Office of the Courts may adopt rules to implement this
8 section.

9 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
10 October 1, 2016. It shall remain effective for a period of [3 years] **5 YEARS** and, at the end
11 of [September 30, 2019,] **SEPTEMBER 30, 2021**, with no further action required by the
12 General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
14 1, 2019.