

**SB0037: Maryland Service Animal Programs - Participant Disqualification - Revisions:** Please vote **IN SUPPORT** of this bill.

Dear Finance Committee Chair and Members:

I respectfully write in **support of SB 0037 – Maryland Service Animal Programs: Participant Disqualification — Revisions.**

This bill makes thoughtful and necessary updates to the standards governing participation in Maryland’s service animal programs for children and veterans. By clarifying when a participant may be disqualified—particularly when their involvement poses a **direct threat to the safety of others or the animal**—**SB 0037 strengthens** these programs while preserving their core mission.

Service animal programs depend on trust, safety, and successful partnerships between participants, trainers, and animals. SB 0037 appropriately recognizes the expertise of nonprofit training entities by allowing them to make informed determinations when safety concerns arise. This flexibility helps protect not only program staff and the public, but also the service animals themselves, whose welfare must be a top priority.

Importantly, the bill does **not undermine access** to service animals for those who genuinely need them. Instead, it ensures that participation standards are clear, reasonable, and focused on creating safe and effective outcomes for all involved. Clear disqualification criteria reduce ambiguity, protect program integrity, and help ensure long-term success for participants who are well-suited to benefit from these services.

**SB 0037** reflects a balanced, responsible approach that **prioritizes safety, accountability, and compassion.** For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to **vote in favor of SB 0037.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Trudy Tibbals