



## TESTIMONY

### People On the Go Maryland

Maryland's statewide self-advocacy/systems advocacy organization run for and by those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

**Bill:** Senate Bill 37 – Maryland Service Animal Programs – Participant Disqualification – Revisions

**Sponsor:** Senator Simonaire

**Committee:** Finance

**Hearing Date:** January 27/2026 2:30pm

**Position:** Favorable

People On the Go Maryland (POG) submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 37. POG is led by and for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, and we work statewide to advance policies that promote inclusion, safety, and equal access to services.

SB 37 updates provisions governing disqualification from the Maryland Children's Service Animal Program and the Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program. In particular, the bill revises statutory language to use the federal Americans with Disabilities Act concept of a "direct threat" when evaluating whether a participant's involvement in a program presents a safety risk to others or to the service animal.

Clear, consistent standards matter. When programs use well-established federal terminology, it helps participants and families understand expectations, supports consistent decision-making by nonprofit training entities, and reinforces that safety determinations should be individualized and based on objective factors.

**POG supports SB 37 because it:**

- Aligns Maryland's program statutes with the Americans with Disabilities Act framework by defining and using the term "direct threat".
- Promotes fairness and transparency for program participants by clarifying when a participant may be disqualified.
- Helps protect the well-being of participants, the public, and the service dog, support dog, or therapy horse through a clear safety standard.

For these reasons, People On the Go Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 37.

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