

# SENATE BILL 77

D2

7lr0843

(PRE-FILED)

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By: Senator Simonaire

Requested: October 12, 2016

Introduced and read first time: January 11, 2017

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

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Committee Report: Favorable

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: February 8, 2017

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

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

4 FOR the purpose of expanding the application of the Courthouse Dog and Child Witness  
5 Pilot Program to civil court proceedings by altering the definition of “child witness”;  
6 and generally relating to the Courthouse Dog and Child Witness Pilot Program.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
8 Chapter 467 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2016  
9 Section 1

10 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
11 Chapter 467 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2016  
12 Section 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**

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.

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**EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.**

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



(2) "Child witness" means a witness who is a minor when the witness testifies in a [criminal] COURT proceeding.

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

6 (ii) received 2 years of training;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 (b) There is a Courthouse Dog and Child Witness Pilot Program in the circuit  
27 courts for Anne Arundel County and Harford County.

28 (c) The purpose of the pilot program is to determine whether to establish a  
29 structured, defined, and systematic approach for providing a courthouse dog to a child  
30 witness in any circuit court proceeding in the State.

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

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

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

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
14 October 1, 2016. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and, at the end of September  
15 30, 2019, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be  
16 abrogated and of no further force and effect.

17 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
18 1, 2017.

Approved:

Governor.

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## President of the Senate.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.