

SENATE BILL 124

D2

9lr1068

By: **Senator Simonaire**

Introduced and read first time: January 18, 2019

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

Committee Report: Favorable

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: February 4, 2019

CHAPTER _____

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

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.



1 testifies in a court proceeding.

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

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

5 (ii) received 2 years of training;

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

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

8 (4) “Facility dog handler” means a person who has received training on:

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

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

15 (5) “Therapy dog” means a dog that has:

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

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

19 (6) “Therapy dog handler” means a person who has received training on:

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

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

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

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

30 (d) To accomplish the purpose of the pilot program, the Administrative Office of

1 the Courts shall:

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

3 (2) establish the procedures that a party in a court proceeding must follow
4 to request that a therapy dog and therapy dog handler or facility dog and facility dog
5 handler assist a child witness; and

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

7 (e) On or before [September 30, 2019,] **SEPTEMBER 30, 2021**, the
8 Administrative Office of the Courts shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with §
9 2–1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on the operation and results
10 of the pilot program.

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] **5 YEARS** and, at the end
15 of [September 30, 2019,] **SEPTEMBER 30, 2021**, with no further action required by the
16 General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

17 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
18 1, 2019.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.