

# HOUSE BILL 384

O3, P1

(5lr2026)

## ENROLLED BILL

— Health and Government Operations/Finance —

Introduced by **Delegates Lehman, Acevero, Allen, Feldmark, Foley, Guyton, Guzzone, Harris, Ivey, Kaufman, J. Long, Patterson, Ruth, Spiegel, Taveras, Taylor, Terrasa, Turner, Williams, Wims, Woods, Woorman, ~~and Ziegler~~ Ziegler, Pena-Melnyk, Cullison, Alston, Bagnall, Bhandari, Hill, Hutchinson, S. Johnson, Kaiser, Kerr, Kipke, Lopez, Martinez, Reilly, Rosenberg, Ross, and White Holland**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this

\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock, \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker.

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

1 AN ACT concerning

### 2 **Maryland Disability Service Animal Program – Established**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Disability Service Animal Program in the  
4 Department of Disabilities; requiring the Department to select a nonprofit training  
5 entity for participation in the Program; establishing the Maryland Disability Service  
6 Animal Program Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund; and generally relating to the  
7 Maryland Disability Service Animal Program.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
9 Article – Human Services

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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.

*Italics indicate opposite chamber/conference committee amendments.*



1 Section 7–114  
2 Annotated Code of Maryland  
3 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

4 BY adding to  
5 Article – Human Services  
6 Section 7–1201 through 7–1206 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 12. Maryland  
7 Disability Service Animal Program”  
8 Annotated Code of Maryland  
9 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

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

12 **Article – Human Services**

13 7–114.

14 (a) (1) The Department is the principal unit of State government responsible  
15 for developing, maintaining, revising, and enforcing statewide disability policies and  
16 standards throughout the units of State government.

17 (2) In this capacity, the Department shall:

18 (i) serve as the principal advisor to the Governor on the means and  
19 methods available to:

20 1. implement and fund support to individuals with  
21 disabilities in accordance with the State Disabilities Plan;

22 2. modify or consolidate support to individuals with  
23 disabilities; and

24 3. collaborate with federal, regional, and local units of  
25 government to enhance the effectiveness of the provision and funding of support to  
26 individuals with disabilities;

27 (ii) annually recommend projects to the Department of Budget and  
28 Management for inclusion in the capital budget to promote access to State–owned facilities  
29 for individuals with disabilities;

30 (iii) assist units of State government to identify federal, State, local,  
31 and private funds available to the State for programs and services for individuals with  
32 disabilities; and

33 (iv) provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions in planning and  
34 implementing collaborative strategies consistent with the State Disabilities Plan.

1 (b) The Department shall oversee and administer the following programs and  
2 units:

3 (1) constituent services and ombudsmen programs;

4 (2) the Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program under Subtitle 6  
5 of this title;

6 (3) the Office of Personal Assistance Services, including the Attendant  
7 Care Program under Subtitle 4 of this title;

8 (4) Telecommunications Access of Maryland under Subtitle 8 of this title;  
9 [and]

10 (5) Telecommunications Devices and Distribution of Accessible  
11 Information for Disabled Individuals under Subtitle 9 of this title; AND

12 (6) **THE MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL PROGRAM UNDER**  
13 **SUBTITLE 12 OF THIS TITLE.**

14 **SUBTITLE 12. MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL PROGRAM.**

15 **7-1201.**

16 (A) **IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**  
17 **INDICATED.**

18 (B) **“DEPARTMENT” MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES.**

19 (C) **“ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL” MEANS ~~AN INDIVIDUAL~~ A RESIDENT OF THE**  
20 **STATE WITH A DISABILITY, AS DEFINED IN THE FEDERAL AMERICANS WITH**  
21 **DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12102.**

22 (D) **“FUND” MEANS THE MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL**  
23 **PROGRAM FUND.**

24 (E) **“NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY” MEANS A CORPORATION, A**  
25 **FOUNDATION, OR ANY OTHER LEGAL ENTITY THAT:**

26 (1) **IS TAX-EXEMPT UNDER § 501(C)(3) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE**  
27 **CODE;**

28 (2) **ENGAGES IN THE TRAINING OF SERVICE ANIMALS FOR USE BY**  
29 **ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS; AND**

1           **(3) HAS BEEN SELECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE**  
2 **SERVICES UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.**

3           **(F) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL**  
4 **PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.**

5           **(G) “PROGRAM PARTICIPANT” MEANS AN ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL WHO**  
6 **PARTICIPATES IN THE PROGRAM.**

7           **(H) (1) “SERVICE ANIMAL” MEANS AN ANIMAL THAT IS INDIVIDUALLY**  
8 **TRAINED TO DO WORK OR PERFORM TASKS FOR THE BENEFIT OF AN INDIVIDUAL**  
9 **WITH A DISABILITY.**

10           **(2) “SERVICE ANIMAL” DOES NOT INCLUDE AN ANIMAL THAT:**

11                   **(I) AS A RESULT OF THE ANIMAL’S PRESENCE, IS MEANT TO**  
12 **DETER CRIME; OR**

13                   **(II) PROVIDES ONLY EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, WELL-BEING,**  
14 **COMFORT, OR COMPANIONSHIP TO AN INDIVIDUAL.**

15           **(I) “SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM PARTICIPANT” MEANS A PROGRAM**  
16 **PARTICIPANT WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES THE TRAINING PROTOCOL**  
17 **SPECIFIED BY A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY.**

18 **7-1202.**

19           **THERE IS A MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL PROGRAM IN THE**  
20 **DEPARTMENT.**

21 **7-1203.**

22           **THE PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM ARE TO:**

23                   **(1) ~~REFER ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO INQUIRE ABOUT~~**  
24 **~~PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM TO~~ SELECT ONE OR MORE NONPROFIT TRAINING**  
25 **ENTITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM; AND**

26                   **(2) PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDING MECHANISMS TO ASSIST**  
27 **ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN THE PROGRAM; ~~AND~~**

1           ~~(3) ENCOURAGE SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS TO ASSIST IN~~  
2 ~~OUTREACH AND REFERRALS TO OTHER ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO COULD~~  
3 ~~BENEFIT FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.~~

4 7-1204.

5           THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

6           (1) ~~MANAGE, SUPERVISE, AND~~ ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM;

7           (2) ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM ~~AND TO~~  
8 ~~ENSURE THAT FUND RESOURCES ARE UTILIZED TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSES OF~~  
9 ~~THE PROGRAM~~, INCLUDING REGULATIONS ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR THE  
10 DEPARTMENT TO:

11           (I) ~~PROMOTE THE PROGRAM TO ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS~~  
12 ~~THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT'S OUTREACH METHODS;~~

13           ~~(II) REFER ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO SELECTED NONPROFIT~~  
14 ~~TRAINING ENTITIES;~~

15           ~~(III)~~ RECEIVE DONATIONS FOR THE FUND; AND

16           ~~(IV)~~ (II) USE REVENUE FROM THE FUND TO PAY SELECTED  
17 NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITIES FOR SERVICES THAT ARE PROVIDED THROUGH THE  
18 PROGRAM; AND

19           (3) SELECT AT LEAST ONE NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY TO:

20           (I) DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A TRAINING PROTOCOL THAT  
21 WILL TEACH EACH PROGRAM PARTICIPANT METHODOLOGIES, STRATEGIES, AND  
22 TECHNIQUES FOR PARTNERING WITH SERVICE ANIMALS;

23           (II) SELECT QUALIFIED PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS ~~FROM THOSE~~  
24 ~~ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS REFERRED TO THE NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY UNDER~~  
25 ~~THE PROGRAM;~~

26           (III) SELECT AN APPROPRIATE SERVICE ANIMAL FOR EACH  
27 PROGRAM PARTICIPANT;

28           (IV) FACILITATE EACH PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S TRAINING  
29 USING THE NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY'S TRAINING PROTOCOL; AND

1 (V) PARTNER EACH SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM PARTICIPANT WITH  
2 THE SERVICE ANIMAL ON THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION  
3 OF THE NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY'S TRAINING PROTOCOL.

4 7-1205.

5 (A) TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SELECTION AS A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY  
6 UNDER § 7-1204 OF THIS SUBTITLE, A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY SHALL:

7 (1) SERVE THE NEEDS OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE; AND

8 (2) GENERATE ITS OWN REVENUE AND REINVEST THE PROCEEDS OF  
9 THAT REVENUE IN THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF ITS PROGRAMS.

10 (B) A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY MAY DISQUALIFY A PROGRAM  
11 PARTICIPANT FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM IF THE NONPROFIT  
12 TRAINING ENTITY DETERMINES THAT THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S INVOLVEMENT  
13 IN THE PROGRAM:

14 (1) PRESENTS A DANGER TO THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S MENTAL  
15 OR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING;

16 (2) PRESENTS A DIRECT THREAT TO OTHERS, AS DEFINED BY THE  
17 FEDERAL AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT;

18 (3) PRESENTS A DIRECT THREAT TO THE SERVICE ANIMAL'S MENTAL  
19 OR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING; OR

20 (4) DOES NOT MEET THE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS OF THE  
21 NONPROFIT.

22 (C) A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT MAY DISCONTINUE INVOLVEMENT IN THE  
23 PROGRAM FOR ANY REASON.

24 7-1206.

25 (A) THERE IS A MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL PROGRAM FUND.

26 (B) THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO:

27 (1) PAY A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY; AND

28 (2) COVER THE COSTS OF ADMINISTERING THE PROGRAM.

1 (C) THE SECRETARY SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.

2 (D) (1) THE FUND IS A SPECIAL, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT  
3 SUBJECT TO § 7-302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.

4 (2) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND, AND THE  
5 COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.

6 (E) (1) THE FUND CONSISTS OF:

7 (I) REVENUE COLLECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT IN THE FORM  
8 OF DONATIONS TO THE PROGRAM;

9 (II) MONEY APPROPRIATED IN THE STATE BUDGET TO THE  
10 FUND; AND

11 (III) ANY OTHER MONEY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE ACCEPTED  
12 FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND.

13 (2) FOR EACH FISCAL YEAR, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE  
14 ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$25,000 TO THE FUND.

15 ~~(2)~~ (3) EXPENDITURES FROM THE FUND MAY BE MADE ONLY IN  
16 ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATE BUDGET.

17 ~~(3)~~ (4) MONEY EXPENDED FROM THE FUND IS SUPPLEMENTAL TO  
18 AND IS NOT INTENDED TO TAKE THE PLACE OF FUNDING THAT OTHERWISE WOULD  
19 BE APPROPRIATED FOR THE PROGRAM.

20 (F) THE FUND MAY BE USED ONLY TO PAY:

21 (1) A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY; AND

22 (2) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF THE PROGRAM.

23 (G) (1) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL INVEST AND REINVEST THE  
24 MONEY OF THE FUND IN THE SAME MANNER AS OTHER STATE MONEY MAY BE  
25 INVESTED.

26 (2) ANY INVESTMENT EARNINGS OF THE FUND SHALL BE CREDITED  
27 TO THE GENERAL FUND OF THE STATE.

28 (H) FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SECTION, THE  
29 DEPARTMENT MAY ACCEPT GIFTS OR GRANTS FOR DONATION TO THE FUND.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That ~~this Act shall take effect~~  
 2 ~~October 1, 2025~~;

3 (a) This Act is contingent on the Department of Disabilities certifying that the  
 4 Department has sufficient staff to administer the Maryland Disability Service Animal  
 5 Program under Title 7, Subtitle 12 of the Human Services Article, as enacted by Section 1  
 6 of this Act.

7 (b) On or before October 1, 2026, the Department of Disabilities shall notify the  
 8 Department of Legislative Services whether the Department has certified that the  
 9 Department has sufficient staff to administer the Maryland Disability Service Animal  
 10 Program.

11 (c) (1) If the Department of Legislative Services receives notification that the  
 12 Department of Disabilities has sufficient staff to administer the Maryland Disability  
 13 Service Animal Program on or before October 1, 2026, this Act shall take effect on the date  
 14 the notice is received by the Department of Legislative Services in accordance with  
 15 subsection (b) of this section.

16 (2) If the Department of Legislative Services receives notice that the  
 17 Department of Disabilities lacks sufficient staff to administer the Maryland Disability  
 18 Service Animal Program on or before October 1, 2026, this Act, with no further action  
 19 required by the General Assembly, shall be null and void.

20 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, subject to Section 2 of this  
 21 Act, this Act shall take effect October 1, 2025.

Approved:

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Governor.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.

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President of the Senate.