

February 26, 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am Stephanie Cooper Greenberg, a volunteer with Pet Partners, Inc., the nation's largest Animal Assisted Therapy organization, and serve as the volunteer coordinator for the Pet Therapy Program at the Johns Hopkins Hospital and the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore.

I also serve as an Evaluator with Pet Partners, Inc. where I administer a Skills and Aptitude test to new and renewing teams to determine if the animal and handler are suitable for therapy work, and who, with rigorous training and testing, become registered Pet Therapy teams. The approved teams, once registered, are trained and vetted, and also carry liability insurance policies provided by the Pet Therapy organization.

In addition to administering Pet Therapy programs, I have also been a Pet Therapy volunteer with my own dogs for the past 12 years. We have had the privilege of working in hospital, nursing home and school settings and have experienced first-hand how beneficial and impactful the mere presence of a therapy animal can be to patients, caregivers, students and teachers.

I wholeheartedly endorse House Bill 981 allowing the use of registered Pet Therapy teams in public school settings.

Please let me know if I can be of assistance and answer any questions relating to the registration and certification process of therapy animals, and their use in school settings.

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