

March 4, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of House Bill 981, which would require each county board of education to allow the use of therapy dogs in public schools. As a parent, I can personally attest to the benefits that come from having a therapy dog present during a meeting at the school involving a struggling student. The mere presence of the dog greatly reduced the stress and anxiety of all humans present in the meeting, creating a more relaxed and positive atmosphere. I strongly believe that this more relaxed atmosphere led to more productive meeting outcomes than would have been possible without the therapy dog's participation.

Therapy dogs are masters of unconditional love. The mere act of petting a dog has been shown to stimulate production of hormones that improve people's moods and reduce feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression. On behalf of all struggling students who would benefit from the anxiety-relieving presence of a therapy dog, please vote in support of House Bill 981!

Sincerely,

Mary Deinlein, Silver Spring, MD (parent and children's advocate)