

MARYLAND JUDICIAL CONFERENCE
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Hon. Mary Ellen Barbera
Chief Judge

187 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, MD 21401

MEMORANDUM

TO: House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Legislative Committee
Suzanne D. Pelz, Esq.
410-260-1523
RE: House Bill 186
Courts – Court Dog Therapy Program – Veterans Treatment
Courts
DATE: January 13, 2021
(1/28)
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Judiciary supports House Bill 186. House Bill 186 expands the purposes of the Court Dog Therapy Program to state that purposes of the Program also include providing a facility dog or therapy dog to a veteran participating in a veterans treatment court proceeding or other related court process or meeting in a Circuit Court or District Court that offers a veterans treatment court program. Such meetings include a status review with a judge or magistrate, a meeting with an attorney, or a meeting with a probation, pretrial, or court case manager.

These bills rename the Court Dog and Child Witness Program as the Court Dog Therapy Program. The bills will allow the program to be in either a participating Circuit Court or in a participating location of the District Court, if that District Court location offers a veterans' treatment court program. The original pilot has been successful in Anne Arundel and Harford Counties regarding child witnesses and victims so expansion to veterans' programs where workable is worthwhile.

cc. Hon. Michael Malone
Judicial Council
Legislative Committee
Kelley O'Connor