



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

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One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

In the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee, March 15, 2023

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on SB 910

Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program – Definitions – Therapy Horse - FAVORABLE

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the state-wide horse industry in Maryland. Our members include horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted therapy programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We represent over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them.

MHC supports the laudable goal of ensuring the safety and welfare of veterans enrolled in equine assisted learning and therapy programs, and of the horses who serve them, as well as the goal of making these proven beneficial services available to the greatest number of veterans.

The current requirement that PATH member centers be rated as “premier accredited,” a process that can be lengthy and very expensive, puts participation in the Maryland Veterans Service Animal program potentially beyond the reach of many local programs that have operated for years with great track records of safety and success.

Deletion of the “premier accredited” requirement will better ensure that these important services are available to the greatest number of veterans, as close to their homes as possible, while at the same time ensuring that only the highest quality programs are delivered.

We urge the Committee to give SB 910 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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