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Written Testimony

**House Bill 384 - Maryland Disability Service Animal Program - Established
Health and Government Operations Committee – January 30, 2025
Support**

Background: House Bill 384 would establish the Maryland Disability Service Animal Program in the Department of Disabilities to refer eligible individuals to certain training entities, provide additional funding mechanisms to assist eligible individuals, and encourage participants to reach out to other individuals who could benefit from the Program; and require the Department to select a nonprofit training entity for participation in the Program; and establishing the Maryland Disability Service Animal Program Fund to pay a participating nonprofit training entity.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies. This includes the Jewish Connection Network, which has an entire department dedicated to ensuring that every member of our community, regardless of their background or abilities, can fully embrace Jewish life.

By establishing this resource for members of the community living with disabilities, you are providing another support for their integration and comfortability. Service animals can assist with mobility, allergies, medical emergency detection, vision and hearing support, mental health, and much more. These highly trained animals can be crucial for the success of their owners.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on HB384.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.