

Subject: Favorable SB157: Maryland Disability Service Animal Program – Established

Date: March 19, 2025

From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

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President@nfbmd.org

To: House Health And Government Operations Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge you to support SB157. This bill establishes a new program in the Maryland Department of Disabilities. This department is the appropriate place to house such a program because it will be able to administer the non-lapsing fund created in this bill. It will also be able to judge the merits of nonprofit entities requesting to do business in Maryland. The department is primarily responsible for coordinating disability policy for the state and establishing regulations and determining who is eligible for the program.

The Maryland Department of Disabilities is charged with improving the lives of Maryland's disabled citizens. The service animal program will make it possible for blind persons to have the opportunity to get a dog trained in Maryland. This will be less expensive for the individual in the long run.

The goal of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland is full integration of the blind into society. This bill will enable the blind to have more mobility by using the assistance of a guide dog. Please help us meet the goal of integration by voting in favor of SB157.