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Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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The Senate of Maryland ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 37 – Service Animals

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting SB 37.

I worked with the *Department of Veterans and Military Families and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council* on this consensus legislation, and they can share more detailed information.

The bill does two things:

- 1) Simply makes the language in the *Veterans Service Animal Program* and the *School Service Animal Program* consistent when referencing those with disabilities; and
- 2) It also updates their language to the standards in the *Federal Americans with Disabilities Act*.

Why this bill is needed is because words matter and we don't want people to become ineligible for disability services simply because of outdated wording.

Currently, we have a few similar service animal programs in law, and one does not have the updated standard language from the *Federal Americans with Disabilities Act*.

This bill aligns the older program with the other more recent program's language.

There is no fiscal impact and no opposition.

We have one amendment that also aligns the service animal in the Department of Disabilities that we passed last year. When this bill was draft, we didn't know if that bill was going to be overridden, but it was ... and hence the amendment to make them all consistent.

For all these reasons, I ask for your favorable consideration.