



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 72

January Session, 2017

Substitute House Bill No. 6999

House of Representatives, March 16, 2017

The Committee on Children reported through REP. URBAN of the 43rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF THERAPY DOGS TO COMFORT CHILDREN TESTIFYING IN CERTAIN CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2017*) (a) The Judicial Branch
2 shall maintain on its Internet web site a section providing information
3 regarding the availability of an accommodation, granted at the court's
4 discretion, for the presence of a dog to provide comfort and support
5 for a child under the age of eighteen during such child's testimony in
6 the criminal prosecution of an offense involving the alleged assault,
7 abuse or sexual abuse of such child. Said web site shall also provide
8 contact information for organizations that provide, free of charge, the
9 use of a dog trained to comfort individuals who have experienced
10 mental, physical or emotional trauma or witnessed or been victims of
11 assault, abuse or sexual abuse.

12 (b) Not later than January 1, 2019, the Chief Court Administrator
13 shall, within available appropriations, develop and implement training
14 for the judges of the Superior Court on (1) the healing value of the

15 human-animal bond for children, (2) the value of therapy animals in
16 dealing with traumatic situations, and (3) the benefits of animal-
17 assisted activities and animal-assisted therapy.

| | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------|
| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: | | |
| Section 1 | <i>October 1, 2017</i> | New section |

KID *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note***State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None***Explanation***

The bill allows a therapy dog to accompany a person 18 years or younger in certain court proceedings and does not result in a fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

The Out Years***State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6999

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF THERAPY DOGS TO COMFORT CHILDREN TESTIFYING IN CERTAIN CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the chief court administrator, by January 1, 2019 and within available appropriations, to develop and implement training for Superior Court judges on the (1) healing value of the human-animal bond for children, (2) value of therapy animals in dealing with traumatic situations, and (3) benefits of animal-assisted activities and animal-assisted therapy.

The bill also requires the Judicial Branch to maintain on its website information about the availability of an accommodation, at the court's discretion, for a dog to be present to provide comfort and support to a child under age 18 during his or her testimony in a criminal prosecution involving alleged assault, abuse, or sexual abuse of the child. The website must also provide contact information for organizations that provide, at no cost, the use of a dog trained to comfort individuals who have (1) experienced mental, physical, or emotional trauma or (2) witnessed or been victims of assault, abuse, or sexual abuse.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2017

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 13 Nay 0 (03/02/2017)