



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 6999

January Session, 2017

* _____HB06999KID____030317_____*

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:		
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Section 1	<i>October 1, 2017</i>	New section
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KID *Joint Favorable Subst.*