



Judiciary Committee

HB 186

Position: Support

Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

We commend Delegate Malone for introducing House Bill 186. This bill would make a life-changing impact on the lives of service men and women in Maryland by including veterans in the Court Dog Therapy Program.

PuppySpot (<https://www.puppyspot.com>) is a community of dog lovers and a trusted service helping customers find healthy puppies from our vetted and screened network of responsible breeders across the country. Our PuppySpot Gives Back Program continues our mission to celebrate dogs always and make a difference by integrating philanthropy into our corporate philosophy and actions. Through this program, we have positively impacted the lives of Wounded Warrior veterans through puppy donations. Additionally, our partners at American Humane provide service dog training for veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) through their Pups4Patriots program and have seen the powerful benefits of the human-animal bond.

Therapy dogs can do wonderful things for veterans. Research evaluating the impact of service dog therapies with military veterans¹ demonstrates help with PTSD; reduced anxiety, panic attacks, and depression; and reduced medication, improved sleep, and the ability to return to work. Ultimately, the inclusion of veterans in the Court Dog Therapy Program would greatly benefit local Maryland veterans struggling with PTSD and TBI; as such, we support House Bill 186.

¹O'Haire, M. E., & Rodriguez, K. E. (2018). Preliminary efficacy of service dogs as a complementary treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder in military members and veterans. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 1(6), e1-8.