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Education, Energy, and the  
Environment Committee

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and  
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## *The Senate of Maryland* ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### **Senate Bill 157 – Maryland Disability Service Animal Program – Established**

I am Senator Simonaire presenting SB 157.

This bill passed this committee unanimously last year, but we ran out of time in the House without a crossfile.

It is crossfiled this year.

Since this is a sponsor only hearing, please see the written testimony and note there is no opposition again this year.

Over the interim, even though there is no mandated money, I worked with key members of the Budget committee to gain their support, as you can see by my co-sponsors.

So, to briefly refresh your memory, this bill is modeled after the successful Service Animal program in the Department of Veterans and Military Families where it has been running since 2017.

Basically, it creates a similar grant program in the Department of Disabilities that partners with nonprofits that train service animals to help those with disabilities and the Department's unique challenges.

Regarding the fiscal note, as we noted last year the assumption is that this program is funded at the current level of the Veterans Program.

- 1. As we did with the Veterans Program, private donations are allowed to fund this program. I had a fundraiser the first year to provide funding, and **Delegate Lehman is Crossfiling and we** have already talked about a fundraiser to fund it the first year.
- 2. Looking at the Vets Program, it did not require any additional staffing, and
- 3. Finally, the administrative cost in the fiscal note are only estimated to be less than \$8,000 annually.
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If you want me to go into more depth, I can but I know it passed unanimously last year, so I will stop there and ask for your favorable consideration.