SENATE BILL 90

P1 Olr0924 (PRE–FILED)

By: **Senator Simonaire** Requested: October 15, 2019

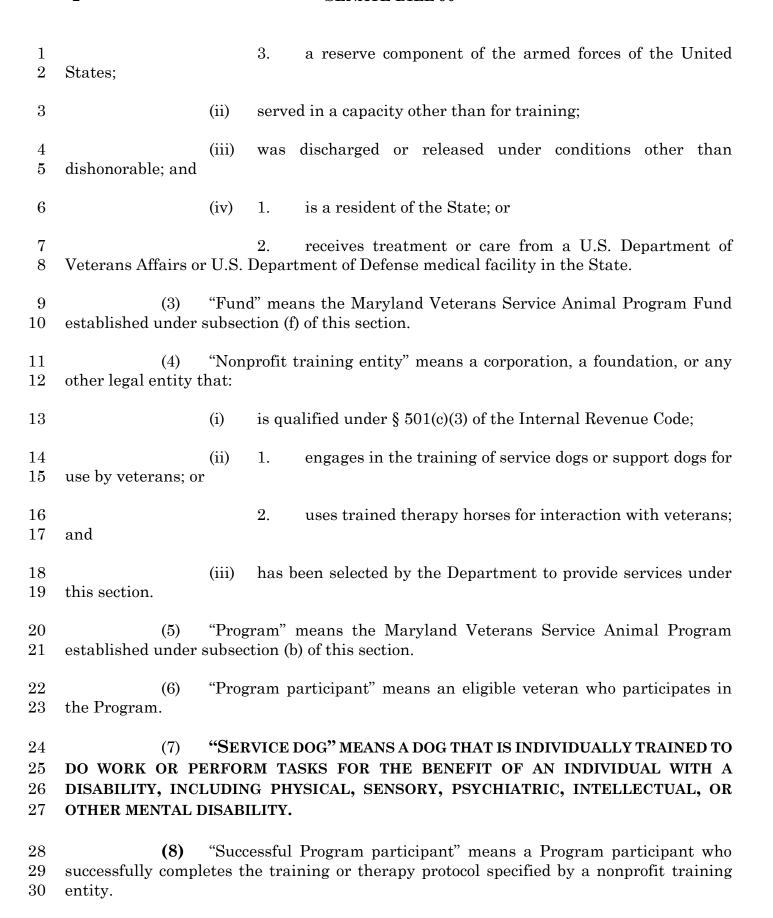
Introduced and read first time: January 8, 2020

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1	AN ACT co	ncerni	ng				
2	Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program – Definitions						
3 4 5 6 7	FOR the purpose of defining the terms "service dog", "support dog", and "therapy horse" for the purposes of the provisions of law governing the Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program in the Department of Veterans Affairs; and generally relating to the Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program in the Department of Veterans Affairs.						
8 9 10 11 12	BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments, Article – State Government Section 9–957 Annotated Code of Maryland (2014 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement)						
13 14	SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:						
15					Article – State Government		
16	9-957.						
17	(a)	(1)	In th	is sect	tion the following words have the meanings indicated.		
18		(2)	"Elig	gible ve	eteran" means an individual who:		
19			(i)	serv	ed on active duty in:		
20				1.	the armed forces of the United States;		
21				2.	the National Guard; or		





1 2 3 4 5	(9) "SUPPORT DOG" MEANS A DOG THAT SERVES AS AN EMOTIONAL SUPPORT OR THERAPY ANIMAL THAT A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL, WITHIN THE MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL'S SCOPE OF PRACTICE, HAS DETERMINED PROVIDES BENEFIT FOR AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A SENSORY, PSYCHIATRIC, INTELLECTUAL, OR OTHER MENTAL DISABILITY.					
6 7 8	(10) "THERAPY HORSE" INCLUDES A HORSE TRAINED FOR INTERACTIONS WITH VETERANS BY A PROFESSIONALLY ACCREDITED EQUINE THERAPY PROGRAM.					
9	(b) There is a Maryland Veterans Service Animal Program in the Department.					
10	(c) The purposes of the Program are to:					
11 12	(1) refer eligible veterans who inquire about participation in the Program to one or more nonprofit training entities;					
13 14	(2) provide additional funding mechanisms to assist veterans participating in the Program;					
15 16	(3) encourage successful Program participants to assist in outreach and referral of other eligible veterans who could benefit from participation in the Program;					
17	(4) assist in the reduction of the Maryland veteran suicide rate; and					
18 19	(5) identify potential capital projects and services to facilitate more services for veterans in the State.					
20	(d) (1) The Department shall select at least one nonprofit training entity to:					
21 22 23	(i) implement a training or therapy protocol for the purposes of the Program that will teach each Program participant methodologies, strategies, and techniques for:					
24	1. partnering with service dogs or support dogs; or					
25	2. interacting with therapy horses;					
26 27	(ii) select qualified Program participants from those eligible veterans referred to the nonprofit entity under the Program;					
28 29	(iii) select an appropriate service dog, support dog, or therapy horse, as applicable, for each Program participant;					

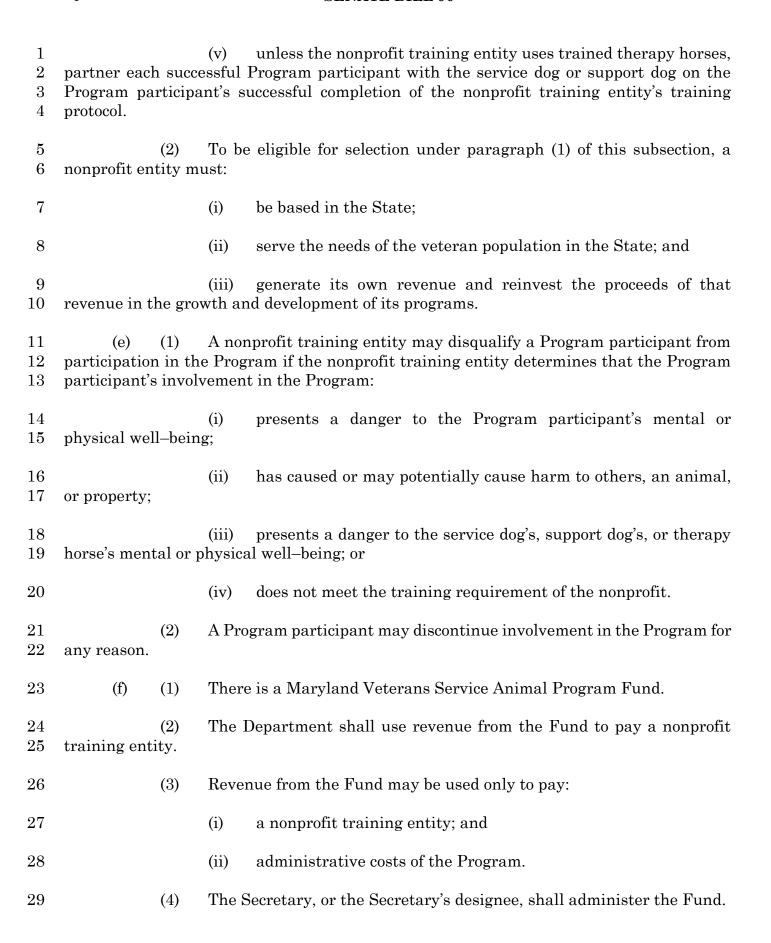
facilitate each Program participant's training or therapy using

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(iv)

the nonprofit training entity's training or therapy protocol; and



1 The Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to § (5)(i) 2 7–302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article. 3 (ii) The State Treasurer shall hold the Fund separately, and the Comptroller shall account for the Fund. 4 The Fund consists of: 5 (6) 6 revenue collected by the Department in the form of donations to (i) 7 the Program; 8 (ii) money appropriated in the State budget to the Fund; and 9 any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit (iii) of the Fund. 10 11 The State Treasurer shall invest the money of the Fund in the same (7)12 manner as other State money may be invested. 13 (8)Any interest earnings of the Fund shall be credited to the General Fund of the State. 14 15 (9)Expenditures from the Fund may be made only in accordance with the 16 State budget. 17 Money expended from the Fund is supplemental to and is not intended 18 to take the place of funding that otherwise would be appropriated for the Program. 19 For the purpose of implementing this section, the Department may 20 accept gifts or grants for donation to the Fund. 21On or before October 1, 2018, and each October 1 thereafter, the 22 Department shall post and maintain on its website a list containing the names of all 23persons who have donated to the Fund in the previous year and have authorized the 24Department to publish their names on its website. 25(h) The Department shall adopt regulations to implement this section, including regulations establishing procedures for the Department to: 2627 promote the Program to eligible veterans through the Department's (1) 28 outreach methods: 29 (2)refer eligible veterans to selected nonprofit entities;

receive donations for the Fund through a link placed in a prominent

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(3)

location on the Department's website; and

- 1 (4) use revenue from the Fund to pay selected nonprofit entities for services 2 that are provided through the Program.
- SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect 4 October 1, 2020.