

# HOUSE BILL No. 4785

June 20, 2017, Introduced by Reps. Hughes, Marino, Lucido, Graves, Crawford, Sheppard, Kesto, Barrett, Faris, Kosowski, Bizon, Vaupel, Howrylak, Canfield, Glenn, Inman, Kelly, Pagel and Noble and referred to the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs.

A bill to establish and implement a veterans service dog grant program; to create a fund; and to prescribe the powers and duties of certain state agencies and officials.

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:**

1           Sec. 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the  
2 "veterans service dog act".

3           Sec. 2. As used in this act:

4           (a) "Department" means the department of military and veterans  
5 affairs.

6           (b) "Fund" means the veterans service dog fund created in  
7 section 4.

8           (c) "Grant program" means the veterans service dog grant  
9 program established in section 3.

10           (d) "Person" means an individual, partnership, corporation,

1 association, governmental entity, or other legal entity.

2 (e) "Service dog" means a dog that is trained to do work or  
3 perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including a  
4 physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental  
5 disability. The work done or tasks performed must be directly  
6 related to the individual's disability and may include, but are not  
7 limited to, guiding an individual who is visually impaired or  
8 blind, alerting an individual who is deaf or has difficulty  
9 hearing, pulling a wheelchair, assisting with mobility or balance,  
10 alerting and protecting an individual who is having a seizure,  
11 retrieving objects, alerting an individual to the presence of  
12 allergens, providing physical support and assistance with balance  
13 and stability to an individual with a mobility disability, helping  
14 an individual with a psychiatric or neurological disability by  
15 preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors,  
16 reminding an individual with mental illness to take prescribed  
17 medications, calming an individual with posttraumatic stress  
18 disorder during an anxiety attack, or doing other specific work or  
19 performing other special tasks. A service dog is not a pet. For  
20 purposes of this subdivision, "do work or perform tasks" does not  
21 include the crime-deterrent effect of an animal's presence or the  
22 provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or  
23 companionship.

24 (f) "Service dog provider" means a person in the business of  
25 training service dogs for sale.

26 (g) "Veteran" means that term as it is defined in section 1 of  
27 1965 PA 190, MCL 35.61.

1           Sec. 3. (1) The department shall establish and implement a  
2 veterans service dog grant program that uses money from the fund to  
3 provide grants for the acquisition of service dogs for veterans.

4           (2) The grant program must require that a veteran applying to  
5 receive a grant contribute at least 50% of the cost of the service  
6 dog, but not more than \$3,000.00.

7           (3) A veteran who wishes to apply for a grant shall submit an  
8 application to the department containing the information required  
9 by the department, including all of the following:

10           (a) The name, address, and other contact information of the  
11 service dog provider that will be providing the service dog.

12           (b) The total cost of purchase of the service dog.

13           (c) The amount of the grant that is being requested.

14           (d) The amount that the veteran will be contributing toward  
15 the purchase of the service dog and documentation of the source of  
16 the veteran's contribution.

17           (e) A letter in support of the grant from a congressionally  
18 chartered veterans' organization or other organization approved by  
19 the department.

20           (4) If the department approves a grant, the department shall  
21 notify the veteran. Upon confirmation that the veteran has paid the  
22 veteran's share of the cost of the service dog, the department  
23 shall disburse the grant funds to the service dog provider.

24           Sec. 4. (1) The veterans service dog fund is created within  
25 the state treasury.

26           (2) The state treasurer may receive money or other assets from  
27 any source for deposit into the fund. The state treasurer shall

1 direct the investment of the fund. The state treasurer shall credit  
2 to the fund interest and earnings from fund investments.

3 (3) The fund must have an accumulated principal limitation of  
4 \$5,000,000.00, exclusive of interest and earnings. Any money  
5 received by the fund after the fund reaches its accumulated  
6 principal limitation must be forwarded to the state treasurer for  
7 deposit into the Michigan veterans' trust fund established in  
8 section 37 of article IX of the state constitution of 1963.

9 (4) Money in the fund at the close of the fiscal year remains  
10 in the fund and does not lapse to the general fund.

11 (5) The department shall be the administrator of the fund for  
12 auditing purposes.

13 (6) The department shall expend money from the fund, upon  
14 appropriation, only for the following:

15 (a) Grants issued pursuant to the grant program.

16 (b) Not more than 10% of the money appropriated from the fund  
17 for the employment of not more than 1 FTE to administer the grant  
18 program.

19 Sec. 5. At least every 5 years, the department shall prepare a  
20 report for the reporting period that describes the money received  
21 by the fund, the balance of the fund, the total expenditures from  
22 the fund, and the number of grants issued with money from the fund.  
23 The department shall provide this report to the standing committees  
24 of each house of the legislature with jurisdiction over veterans  
25 issues.

26 Enacting section 1. This act takes effect 90 days after the  
27 date it is enacted into law.