
SENATE BILL 6809

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Senator Jacobsen

Read first time 01/29/10. Referred to Committee on Government Operations & Elections.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a pilot program to investigate the
2 benefits of service dogs in the treatment or rehabilitation of veterans
3 with physical or mental injuries or disabilities and for other
4 purposes; and adding new sections to chapter 43.60A RCW.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A RCW
7 to read as follows:

8 The director is required to carry out a pilot program to assess the
9 benefits, feasibility, and advisability of using service dogs for the
10 treatment or rehabilitation of veterans with physical or mental
11 injuries or disabilities, including posttraumatic stress disorder.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A RCW
13 to read as follows:

14 The director shall carry out the pilot program by partnering with
15 nonprofit organizations that:

16 (1) Have experience providing service dogs to individuals with
17 injuries or disabilities;

1 (2) Do not charge fees for the dogs, services, or lodging that the
2 nonprofit organizations provide; and

3 (3) Are accredited by a generally accepted, industry-standard
4 accrediting institution.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A RCW
6 to read as follows:

7 The director shall reimburse partners for costs relating to the
8 pilot program as follows:

9 (1) For the first fifty service dogs provided under the pilot
10 program, all costs relating to the provision of the dogs.

11 (2) For any service dogs provided under the pilot program after the
12 first fifty service dogs are provided, all costs relating to the
13 provision of every other dog.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A RCW
15 to read as follows:

16 (1) As part of the pilot program, the director must provide a
17 service dog to a number of veterans with physical or mental injuries or
18 disabilities that is greater than or equal to the greater of:

19 (a) Two hundred; or

20 (b) The minimum number of such veterans required to produce
21 scientifically valid results with respect to assessing the benefits and
22 costs of the use of the service dogs for the treatment or
23 rehabilitation of such veterans.

24 (2) The director shall ensure that:

25 (a) Half of the participants in the pilot program are veterans who
26 suffer primarily from a mental health injury or disability; and

27 (b) Half of the participants in the pilot program are veterans who
28 suffer primarily from a physical injury or disability.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A RCW
30 to read as follows:

31 In carrying out the pilot program, the director shall conduct a
32 scientifically valid research study of the costs and benefits
33 associated with the use of service dogs for the treatment or
34 rehabilitation of veterans with physical or mental injuries or
35 disabilities. The matters studied must include the following:

1 (1) The therapeutic benefits to such veterans, including the
2 quality of life benefits reported by such veterans partaking in the
3 pilot program.

4 (2) The economic benefits of using service dogs for the treatment
5 or rehabilitation of such veterans, including:

6 (a) Savings on health care costs, including savings relating to
7 reductions in hospitalization and reduction in the use of prescription
8 drugs; and

9 (b) Productivity and employment gains for such veterans; and

10 (3) The effectiveness of using service dogs to prevent suicide.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A RCW
12 to read as follows:

13 Beginning by July 1, 2011, and by every July 1st thereafter, the
14 director shall submit to the appropriate committees of the legislature
15 a report on the findings of the director with respect to the pilot
16 program.

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