



Legislative Council Staff

Research Note

Version: Final

Date: 07/20/16

Bill Number

House Bill 16-1112

Sponsors

***Representative Landgraf,
Senator Crowder***

Short Title

***Training Veterans To Train
Service Dogs Pilot Program***

Research Analyst

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Status

This research note reflects the final version of the bill and became effective on June 10, 2016.

Summary

This bill creates the Training Veterans to Train Their Own Service Dogs Pilot Program (program) in the Department of Human Services (DHS). The program will identify up to ten eligible veterans to pair with dogs selected by qualified trainers. Program participants will foster, train, and ultimately use the dogs as their own service or companion animals. Participants who graduate from the program with a trained dog will be eligible, if willing, to identify, foster, and train a subsequent dog for another eligible veteran who is unable to complete one or more parts of the process due to physical limitations.

The DHS is required to initiate a competitive request for proposals (RFP) to select two in-state nonprofit agencies that represent different counties with which to contract for the implementation and operation of the program. The RFP must be released no later than August 1, 2016; proposals must be received no later than October 1, 2016; and the DHS must select a nonprofit on or before November 1, 2016. The bill identifies the criteria the DHS must use in selecting the two nonprofit agencies, and the minimum requirements of the agencies to operate the program. The DHS is also required to annually report program outcomes and any program evaluation conducted to select committees of the General Assembly. The pilot program is repealed on September 1, 2026.

Background

The Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, and DHS are the state agencies that offer services to Colorado veterans. These

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state agencies provide assistance to veterans to apply for federal benefits and file claims, career assistance through veteran workforce centers, and housing options through veterans community living centers. There are a number of Colorado nonprofits that offer additional assistance to veterans, including Freedom Service Dogs of America, which offers full-access service dogs to veterans free of charge.

House Action

House Public Health and Human Services Committee (March 8, 2016). At the hearing, representatives from the University of Denver, Victory Service Dogs, Inc., Canines Providing Assistance to Wounded Warriors, and members of the public testified in support of the bill. Representatives from All Breed Rescue and Training, Victory Service Dogs, Inc., Mountain High Service Dogs, the United Veterans Committee of Colorado, the Colorado Federation of Dog Clubs, and members of the public testified in a neutral capacity. The committee passed amendments L.001 and L.003 and referred the bill, as amended, to the House Appropriations Committee.

Amendment L.001 required the DHS to establish requirements for a nonprofit to participate in the program. The amendment also increased the number of Colorado nonprofit agencies selected to participate in the program to two, from two separate counties in the state. Amendment L.003 specified that the program was to be funded with \$130,000 from the Colorado Veterans Trust Fund.

House Appropriations Committee (April 28, 2016). The committee referred the bill to the House Committee of the Whole with no amendments.

House second reading (April 28, 2016). The House adopted the House Public Health Care and Human Services committee report, and Amendment No. 2. Amendment No. 2 added additional eligibility criteria for nonprofit agencies to participate in the program. The House passed the bill on second reading, as amended.

House third reading (April 29, 2016). The House passed the bill on third reading with no amendments.

Senate Action

Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee (May 3, 2016). At the hearing, a representative from the United Veterans Committee testified in support of the bill. The committee passed amendment L.005 and referred the bill, as amended, to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Amendment L.005 removed the section of the bill that funded the program using money from the Colorado Veterans Trust Fund.

Senate Appropriations Committee (May 5, 2016). The committee adopted amendment J.001 and referred the bill to the Senate Committee of the Whole, as amended. Amendment J.001 added an appropriation clause to the bill.

Senate second reading (May 5, 2016). The Senate adopted the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs and the Senate Appropriations committee reports, and passed the bill on second reading, as amended.

Senate third reading (May 6, 2016). The Senate passed the bill on third reading with no amendments.

Consideration of Amendments

Consideration of amendments (May 10, 2016). The House concurred with Senate amendments and repassed the bill.