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SENATE BILL NO. 1224

Offered January 14, 2015

Prefiled January 14, 2015

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 51.5-132.1, relating to Commissioner for Aging and Rehabilitative Services; voluntary certification program for service dogs; penalty.*

Patron—Reeves

Referred to Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 51.5-132.1 as follows:****§ 51.5-132.1. Commissioner to establish voluntary certification program for service dogs; penalty.***A. As used in this section:**"Accredited training provider" means a training provider for service dogs that has been accredited pursuant to the regulations of the Commissioner.**"Certified service dog" means a service dog as defined in § 51.5-40.1 that has been certified by the Commission as having completed training from an accredited training provider.**"Otherwise disabled person" means the same as that term is defined in § 51.5-40.1.**"Service dog" means the same as that term is defined in § 51.5-40.1**B. The Commissioner shall promulgate regulations pursuant to the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.) and consistent with federal laws and regulations to establish a voluntary certification program for service dogs that have completed training from an accredited training provider. The regulations shall:**1. Develop procedures for determining the qualifications for a training provider to be accredited by the Commissioner to provide service dog training. Such qualifications shall include the ability of the training provider to verify that a service dog has been trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an otherwise disabled person;**2. Provide for the certification of a service dog when the owner provides evidence of the successful completion of training from an accredited training provider; and**3. Establish a fee system to offset the costs of the certification program.**C. Upon granting the certification, the Commissioner shall provide a serialized tag to be affixed to the vest of the service dog in an area that is clearly visible to public view.**D. The certification established under this section shall be voluntary and shall not be construed to restrict or otherwise affect the right of any person to hold out a dog as a service dog if such dog meets the definition of service dog in § 51.5-40.1; however, no person may hold out a dog as a certified service dog unless the dog has been granted the certification in accordance with this section. Any person who violates the provisions of this subsection is guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor.*

INTRODUCED

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