

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 3850**

---

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Tara T. Hong*

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act establishing the Massachusetts veterans service dog program.

PETITION OF:

| NAME:                         | DISTRICT/ADDRESS:     | DATE ADDED:      |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <i>Tara T. Hong</i>           | <i>18th Middlesex</i> | <i>1/8/2025</i>  |
| <i>Dennis C. Gallagher</i>    | <i>8th Plymouth</i>   | <i>1/14/2025</i> |
| <i>Colleen M. Garry</i>       | <i>36th Middlesex</i> | <i>3/9/2025</i>  |
| <i>Vanna Howard</i>           | <i>17th Middlesex</i> | <i>8/16/2025</i> |
| <i>Patrick Joseph Kearney</i> | <i>4th Plymouth</i>   | <i>5/20/2025</i> |
| <i>Samantha Montaño</i>       | <i>15th Suffolk</i>   | <i>3/5/2025</i>  |
| <i>Steven George Xiarhos</i>  | <i>5th Barnstable</i> | <i>9/21/2025</i> |

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 3850**

By Representative Hong of Lowell, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3850) of Tara T. Hong and others relative to establishing a veterans service dog program. Veterans and Federal Affairs.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**

An Act establishing the Massachusetts veterans service dog program.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 29 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after  
2 section 2JJJJJ, added by section 58 of chapter 140 of the acts of 2024, the following section:-

3 Section 2KKKKKK. (a) There shall be a separate fund on the books of the  
4 commonwealth to be known as the Massachusetts Veterans Service Dog Fund. The fund shall be  
5 credited with: (i) appropriations or other money authorized or transferred by the general court  
6 and specifically designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) funds from public and private sources,  
7 including, but not limited to, gifts, grants and donations; and (iii) any interest earned on the  
8 assets of the fund.

9 (b) Such monies shall be deposited to the credit of the fund and shall, in addition to any  
10 other monies made available for such purpose, be expended by executive office of veterans'  
11 services, without further appropriation, for the Massachusetts veterans service dog program  
12 established pursuant to section 19 of chapter 115. Amounts credited to the fund shall not be

13 subject to further appropriation and money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall  
14 not revert to the General Fund. The fund shall retain all interest earned on sums deposited in the  
15 fund.

16 SECTION 2. Chapter 115 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the  
17 following section:-

18 Section 19. (a) For the purpose of this section, the following terms shall, unless the  
19 context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

20 “Service dog”, a dog specifically trained to help persons with disabilities and perform  
21 specific tasks to assist a veteran with a disability, as defined under the Americans with  
22 Disabilities Act pursuant to 42 U.S.C. sections 12101 et seq.

23 “The office”, the executive office of veterans’ services.

24 “Veteran”, any person who has served in the United States Armed Forces and received an  
25 honorable discharge or general discharge under honorable conditions.

26 (b) The office shall establish and administer the Massachusetts veterans service dog  
27 program that shall:

28 (i) assess the needs of Massachusetts veterans for service dogs;

29 (ii) partner with a professional service dog organization accredited by Assistance Dogs  
30 International and headquartered in the commonwealth to procure and train service dogs;

31 (iii) match trained service dogs with eligible veterans based on their needs and work to  
32 provide those veterans eligible for a service dog within 1 year; and

33 (iv) provide resources and training for service dogs to enhance the transition for the  
34 veteran and service dog.

35 (c) Veterans that qualify for the Massachusetts veterans service dog program shall:

36 (i) be a resident of the commonwealth;

37 (ii) have a documented disability that may benefit from a service dog; and

38 (iii) obtain a recommendation from a licensed healthcare professional or mental health  
39 provider for a service dog.

40 (d) The office shall prepare an annual report that includes, but is not limited to: (i) details  
41 on the program's implementation; (ii) the number of service dogs matched with veterans; and  
42 (iii) the impact service dogs have had on participating veterans. The office shall submit the  
43 annual report to the governor, the chairs of the joint committee on veterans and federal affairs  
44 and the offices of the house and senate clerk.

45 SECTION 3. Subsection (c) of section 139 chapter 140 of the General Laws, as appearing  
46 in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:- No fee shall  
47 be charged for a license issued under this section for a service dog pursuant to section 19 of  
48 chapter 115.

49 SECTION 4. This act shall take effect 1 year after its passage.