



General Assembly

January Session, 2015

**Raised Bill No. 6725**

LCO No. 3189



Referred to Committee on COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

Introduced by:  
(KID)

***AN ACT CONCERNING ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY SERVICES.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17a-22ee of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

3 (a) For purposes of this section: [ ]

4 (1) "Animal-assisted activity" means any activity that involves a  
5 team consisting of a registered handler and therapy animal interacting  
6 with individuals within the state;

7 (2) ["animal-assisted therapy"] "Animal-assisted therapy" means  
8 goal-directed intervention in which [animals are] a team consisting of a  
9 registered handler and a therapy animal is used as an integral part of  
10 the [crisis] critical incident response process to aid individuals who  
11 have experienced mental, physical or emotional trauma;

12 (3) ["animal-assisted therapy community"] "Animal-assisted therapy  
13 community" means the local or regional entities capable of engaging in  
14 animal-assisted activities or providing animal-assisted therapy to

15 individuals within the state; [and]

16 (4) ["animal-assisted activity organization"] "Animal-assisted  
17 activity organization" means any entity involved in training,  
18 evaluating [and] or registering members of the animal-assisted therapy  
19 community; [.]

20 (5) "Animal-assisted critical incident response team" means a team  
21 of registered handlers and therapy animals that have been (A) trained,  
22 evaluated and registered by an animal-assisted activity organization,  
23 and (B) mobilized by the Department of Children and Families to  
24 engage in animal-assisted activities or provide animal-assisted  
25 therapy;

26 (6) "Registered handler" means an individual who has been  
27 screened, trained and registered by a national animal therapy  
28 organization such as Pet Partners, Therapy Dogs International or a  
29 similar organization, to engage in animal-assisted activities or provide  
30 animal-assisted therapy, or both; and

31 (7) "Therapy animal" means any animal trained to provide comfort  
32 to individuals who have (A) experienced mental, physical or emotional  
33 trauma, (B) witnessed, or have been a victim of, an act of violence, or  
34 (C) behavioral health care needs. "Therapy animal" does not include a  
35 "social comfort animal" providing visitation services to aged, infirm or  
36 chronically ill individuals or a "service animal" providing task-trained  
37 services to disabled individuals.

38 (b) Not later than January 1, [2014] 2016, the Commissioner of  
39 Children and Families shall, within available appropriations, develop  
40 and implement training for certain employees of the Department of  
41 Children and Families and mental health care providers on (1) the  
42 healing value of the human-animal bond for children, (2) the value of  
43 therapy animals in dealing with traumatic situations, and (3) the  
44 [benefit of an] benefits of animal-assisted activities and animal-assisted  
45 therapy. [program.]

