

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 126

BY REPRESENTATIVE MANDIE LANDRY

COURTS: Provides relative to the use of a facility dog by a witness during certain circumstances

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 15:284(A), (D), and (F), relative to the use of facility dogs; to
3 provide for the use of facility dogs by victims of sex offenses; and to provide for
4 related matters.

5 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

6 Section 1. R.S. 15:284(A), (D), and (F) are hereby amended and reenacted to read
7 as follows:

8 §284. Facility dogs; use in court; procedure

9 A. The court shall allow a any witness who is either under eighteen years of
10 age, ~~or~~ who has a developmental disability as defined in R.S. 28:451.2, or any in a
11 trial for a sex offense as defined in R.S. 15:541 to have be accompanied by a facility
12 dog, if available, accompany them while testifying in court.

13 * * *

14 D. To ensure that the presence of a facility dog does not influence the jury
15 or is not a reflection on the truthfulness of any testimony that is offered by the victim
16 or witness, the court shall obscure the presence of the dog from the jury at all times,
17 instruct the jury on the role of the facility dog, and ensure that the facility dog is a
18 trained animal. The facility dog's entry into and exit from the courtroom shall be
19 done outside the presence of the jury.

20 * * *

21 F. This Section may be referred to and ~~may be~~ cited as "Duvall's Duvall and
22 Karissa's Law".

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 126 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Mandie Landry

Abstract: Authorizes the use of facility dogs by certain witnesses who participate in trials relative to sex offenses.

Present law requires the court to allow a witness who is either under 18 years of age or who has a developmental disability to be accompanied by a facility dog, if available, while testifying in court.

Present law authorizes the court to allow the use of facility dogs in cases involving all other witnesses.

Present law requires notice to the court and provides for jury instructions regarding the role of the facility dog.

Present law defines "facility dog" as a dog that is certified and a graduate of an assistance dog organization that is accredited and is specially trained to provide emotional support to witnesses testifying in judicial proceedings without causing a distraction during the proceedings.

Proposed law retains present law and requires the court to allow a witness in any trial of a sex offense to be accompanied by a facility dog, if available, while testifying in court.

Proposed law requires that the court obstruct the presence of the dog from the jury. Further requires that the dog's entry and exit from the courtroom be conducted out of the presence of the jury.

Proposed law provides that the law be referred to and cited as "Duvall and Karissa's Law".

(Amends R.S. 15:284(A), (D) and (F))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Judiciary to the engrossed bill:

1. Make technical changes.
2. Provide that a witness in a trial of a sex offense may be accompanied by a facility dog.
3. Require that the presence of the dog be obstructed from the jury's view.
4. Require the entry and exit of the dog from the courtroom to be outside of the presence of the jury.