
DIGEST

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HB 126 Reengrossed

2026 Regular Session

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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 permits the court to order that the presence of the dog be obstructed from the view of the jury. On motion of the court or either party, permits the court to instruct the jury on the role of the dog. 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.

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1. Make technical corrections.
2. Permit the court or the parties to order that the facility dog's presence be obscured from the presence of the jury.
3. Permit the court or the parties to make a motion to instruct the jury on the role of the facility dog.