

**HOUSE SUMMARY OF SENATE AMENDMENTS****HB 126****2026 Regular Session****Mandie Landry**

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

**Synopsis of Senate Amendments**

1. Provides that all precautions should be taken to obscure the presence of a facility dog from the jury.

**Digest of Bill as Finally Passed by Senate**

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 a "facility dog" as a dog that is certified, has graduated from an accredited assistance dog organization, 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 a trial for 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 and that all precautions be taken to obscure the presence of the dog from 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))