

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to proceedings involving minors or  
 3           persons with intellectual disabilities; amending s.  
 4           92.55, F.S.; providing that judges may allow the use  
 5           of certain service animals, therapy animals, or  
 6           facility dogs in proceedings involving abuse,  
 7           abandonment, or neglect; allowing such animals to be  
 8           used when taking the testimony of a person who has an  
 9           intellectual disability; providing an effective date.

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 11 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 13           Section 1. Subsection (5) of section 92.55, Florida  
 14 Statutes, is amended to read:

15           92.55 Judicial or other proceedings involving victim or  
 16 witness under the age of 18, a person who has an intellectual  
 17 disability, or a sexual offense victim or witness; special  
 18 protections; use of ~~registered~~ service animals, ~~or~~ therapy  
 19 animals, or facility dogs.-

20           (5) The court may set any other conditions it finds just  
 21 and appropriate when taking the testimony of a child victim or  
 22 witness or a sexual offense victim or witness, a person who has  
 23 an intellectual disability, including the use of a service  
 24 animal, or therapy animal, or facility dog, that has been  
 25 trained and evaluated ~~and registered~~ according to industry

26 | ~~national~~ standards, in any proceeding involving a sexual offense  
27 | or child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. When deciding whether  
28 | to permit a child victim or witness or sexual offense victim or  
29 | witness to testify with the assistance of a ~~registered~~ service  
30 | animal, or therapy animal, or facility dog, the court shall  
31 | consider the age of the child victim or witness, the age of the  
32 | sexual offense victim or witness at the time the sexual offense  
33 | occurred, the interests of the child victim or witness or sexual  
34 | offense victim or witness, the rights of the parties to the  
35 | litigation, and any other relevant factor that would facilitate  
36 | the testimony by the child victim or witness or sexual offense  
37 | victim or witness.

38 |       Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.