

**ASSEMBLY, No. 611**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**219th LEGISLATURE**

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PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman JOHN DIMAIO**

**District 23 (Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren)**

**Assemblyman RALPH R. CAPUTO**

**District 28 (Essex)**

**Assemblywoman AURA K. DUNN**

**District 25 (Morris and Somerset)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblymen DePhillips and Rooney**

**SYNOPSIS**

Designates Seeing Eye® dog as State Dog.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/13/2020)**

1   **AN ACT** designating the Seeing Eye® dog as the New Jersey State  
2       Dog and supplementing chapter 9A of Title 52 of the Revised  
3       Statutes.

4  
5   **WHEREAS**, Service dogs help persons with visual impairment achieve  
6       greater independence, dignity, and self-confidence, and the dogs  
7       themselves are known for their intelligence, loyalty, and gentle  
8       temperament; and

9   **WHEREAS**, The Seeing Eye is one of the world’s premier service dog  
10      schools, so much so that the phrase “Seeing Eye® dog” is  
11      synonymous with service dogs around the world; and

12   **WHEREAS**, The Seeing Eye is a New Jersey institution that has been  
13      headquartered in the State since 1931; and

14   **WHEREAS**, The current Seeing Eye headquarters includes a 60-acre  
15      training center in Morristown and a 330-acre breeding center in  
16      Chester; and

17   **WHEREAS**, The Seeing Eye has matched over 17,000 people with dogs  
18      since its inception; and

19   **WHEREAS**, Approximately 1,770 people in the United States and  
20      Canada are currently paired with Seeing Eye® dogs; and

21   **WHEREAS**, The Seeing Eye receives no funding from the State or  
22      federal governments, and is entirely supported by contributions  
23      from individuals, foundations, corporations, bequests, and other  
24      planned gifts; and

25   **WHEREAS**, The Seeing Eye is especially useful to veterans, giving  
26      them priority in its application process; and

27   **WHEREAS**, The Seeing Eye charges veterans only a nominal one dollar  
28      tuition fee for services, which covers the cost of the dog,  
29      instruction, transportation, room, board, equipment, and follow-up;  
30      and

31   **WHEREAS**, These remarkable dogs are trained to guide their handlers  
32      around obstacles, alert their handlers to changes in elevation and  
33      tripping hazards, and to safely navigate street crossings; and

34   **WHEREAS**, Seeing Eye® dogs are unique among service dogs in their  
35      capacity for “intelligent disobedience.” Seeing Eye® dogs are  
36      taught to ignore commands that might jeopardize the safety of the  
37      handler, such as crossing against traffic or stepping off a vacant  
38      subway platform; and

39   **WHEREAS**, Designating the Seeing Eye® dog as the State Dog would  
40      honor Seeing Eye® dogs and the impact they have on their handlers  
41      and on society at large, and celebrate the charitable spirit of The  
42      Seeing Eye; now, therefore,

43  
44       **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
45       *of New Jersey:*

46  
47       1.   The Seeing Eye® dog is designated as the New Jersey State  
48       Dog.

1        2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

5

6        This bill designates the Seeing Eye® dog as the State Dog of  
7 New Jersey.

8        The Seeing Eye is one of the world's premier service dog  
9 training organizations and has been headquartered in New Jersey  
10 since 1931.

11        With facilities in Morristown and Chester, the Seeing Eye pairs  
12 specially trained service dogs with persons with visual impairment,  
13 greatly improving the person's independence and mobility. The  
14 Seeing Eye is particularly useful to veterans, giving them priority in  
15 its application process and charging them only a nominal one dollar  
16 fee for services, which covers the cost of the dog, instruction,  
17 transportation, room, board, equipment, and follow-up.

18        Seeing Eye® dogs are unique among service dogs in their  
19 capacity for "intelligent disobedience." They are taught to ignore  
20 commands that might jeopardize the safety of the handler, such as  
21 crossing against traffic or stepping off a vacant subway platform.  
22 They are also renowned for their intelligence, loyalty, and gentle  
23 temperament.

24        Twelve states have designated state dogs. Accordingly, New  
25 Jersey should designate the Seeing Eye® dog as the State Dog of  
26 New Jersey in order to honor Seeing Eye® dogs and the impact  
27 they have on their handlers and on society at large, and celebrate  
28 the charitable spirit of The Seeing Eye.