

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2849

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 15, 2018

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2849.

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

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

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

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

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