

Testimony in support of HB 16-1308
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Mr. Chairman Kagan and members of the Judiciary committee: My name is Natalie Hunter. I am here today representing Freedom Service Dogs. I am a client partnered with a service animal custom trained for me by that organization. I appreciate this opportunity to advocate passage of HB 16-1308.

I have been partnered with a service animal for several years. During that time, the number of individuals attempting to disguise a pet as a service animal has exploded exponentially. In fact, entire cottage industries now market paraphernalia online to the general public for the sole purpose of masquerading a pet as a legitimate service animal.

As a member of a legitimate, fully certified service dog team, I have personally experienced the negative consequences such misrepresentations engender. The adverse consequences typically fall into three categories:

- 1) Confrontations in public venues about the legitimacy of my service dog's status. I have been subjected to security personnel and business owners demanding that I present written proof of my service's dog certification status prior to admission. Questioning the validity of my service animal's access to public places has sharply increased as a result of others misrepresenting their pets as service animals when in fact, these animals are untrained. Untrained animals are prone to misbehavior in chaotic public settings. Every time a pet owner decides to disguise their animal as a trained service dog, the possibility exists for that animal to exhibit negative behaviors. When such behavior occurs in public venues, it casts dispersions on all legitimate service dog teams.
- 2) Negative encounters with untrained pets in public venues. Legitimate service animals do not solicit attention from the public nor do they interact without express permission from their handlers. Untrained pets are prone to ignoring their owners. They approach strangers to garner attention. They approach a legitimate service dog with questionable motives. They lack the self-restraint to ignore other dogs which a legitimately trained service dog has been taught. Such unwanted interaction distracts my service dog from performing her duties. The behavior of untrained pets in public venues is unpredictable, increasing the likelihood of disruption in the form of barking, inappropriate elimination, or aggressiveness directed toward my legitimate service animal.
- 3) Growing reluctance by businesses to eject fake service dogs from their premises. Given the proliferation of outlets marketing faux service dog paraphernalia, pet owners are have become increasingly emboldened to pass off their pets as a service

animals. Businesses are encountering questionable service animals more frequently than ever. Pet owners tender fraudulent --- yet official-looking --- documents informing business representatives that access is legally mandated. As such, these people and their pets are being admitted by virtue of rank intimidation.

Freedom Service Dogs invested thousands of dollars into training my service dog, Kohlie. The staff there evaluated her for temperament, physical soundness, and only then spent months preparing her for the challenges of public access. She was exposed to a wide range of situations that would be overwhelming to an untrained animal. As a result, I am confident taking Kohlie anywhere, knowing she won't exhibit negative behaviors.

My well-being depends on Kohlie's ability to carry out tasks that mitigate my disability. She makes it possible for me to live independently. She makes it possible for me to enjoy everyday activities others take for granted.

Owners masquerading their pets as trained service animals do everyone a disservice. They present unnecessary challenges to those of us who are partnered with legitimately trained dogs, they potentially endanger members of the general public, and they impose significant stress on a pet they ostensibly love.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be supported by a valid receipt or invoice. This ensures transparency and allows for easy verification of the data.

In the second section, the author details the various methods used to collect and analyze the data. This includes both manual data entry and the use of specialized software tools. The goal is to ensure that the data is both accurate and easy to interpret.

The third section provides a detailed breakdown of the results. It shows that there is a significant correlation between the variables being studied. This finding is supported by statistical analysis and is consistent with previous research in the field.

Finally, the document concludes with a series of recommendations for future research. It suggests that further studies should be conducted to explore the underlying causes of the observed trends. This will help to develop more effective strategies for addressing the issues at hand.