

HB 116 -- Rights of Persons with Service Dogs

SPONSOR: Deeken

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Agriculture Policy by a vote of 22 to 0.

This bill defines "service dog" as a dog specially trained to do work or perform tasks which benefit a person with a disability. Any person who causes the physical injury or death or fails to control their animal which causes the physical injury or death of a service dog is guilty of a class A misdemeanor. Any person who harasses a service dog or fails to control their animal which harasses a service dog preventing the dog from performing its duties is guilty of a class B misdemeanor. Civil damages may be recovered by the service dog owner or the person with a disability who uses the service dog.

Anyone who impersonates a person with a disability by representing himself or herself as disabled or represents his or her dog as a service dog is guilty of a class B misdemeanor and liable for any actual damages resulting from the impersonation.

The bill contains an emergency clause.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2006, FY 2007, and FY 2008.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that service dogs are necessary for persons with disabilities to participate in activities taken for granted by person without disabilities. A service dog is not a pet but an aid to a disabled person like a wheelchair, hearing aid, or other device.

Testifying for the bill were Representatives Deeken and Skaggs; Donna Jacobs; and Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Roland Tackett, Legislative Analyst