

HB 1436 -- RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES

SPONSOR: Newman

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Special Committee on Disability Services by a vote of 7 to 0.

This bill adds an individual with mental disabilities to the list of people who must be afforded the same rights as those without disabilities to use streets, highways, sidewalks, walkways, public buildings, public facilities, and other public places. An individual with mental disabilities is also entitled to equal accommodation from common carriers, airlines, motor vehicles, trains, buses, taxis, and any other public conveyances or modes of transportation, as well as hotels, places of public accommodation, and other places to which the general public is invited and to be accompanied by a guide, hearing, or service dog in any of these places without being required to pay an extra charge.

A member of a service dog team has the right to be accompanied by the dog while the dog is in training and will be liable for any damages to a facility caused by the dog during training. A service dog team consists of a trained service dog, a disabled person or child, and an adult person who has been trained to handle the dog. The term "service dog" is revised to include a search and rescue dog that is trained to assist a person with a mental disability from becoming lost and a service team dog that has been trained to help with the search and rescue of an individual with a disability.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2013, FY 2014, and FY 2015.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will tighten up the statutory rights of individuals with mental disabilities by allowing more protections for disabled individuals with service dogs.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Newman.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.