

HB 840 -- INJURY OR DEATH TO A SERVICE DOG

SPONSOR: Kratky

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Civil and Criminal Proceedings by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 9 to 0.

Currently, any individual who knowingly or intentionally fails to maintain control of his or her animal to prevent the animal from chasing or harassing a service dog while the dog is functioning as a service dog and temporarily interferes with the service dog's ability to carry out the dog's function is guilty of a class B misdemeanor. This bill adds that the owner of an animal that causes substantial physical injury or death to the service dog must be ordered to fully compensate for the injury, loss, or replacement of the service dog.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that service dogs are highly trained, expensive, and relatively rare. Whenever one is attacked by another dog they often cannot work again. This is a financial hardship on the service dog user and it also means that they cannot have a normal life while waiting for their replacement dog.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Kratky; Ron Pharris; Sue Tussey; and Nick Whitney, America's Guide Dog Users.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.