

HCS HB 1093 -- RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH SERVICE DOGS

SPONSOR: Myers (Deeken)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Agriculture by a vote of 23 to 0.

This substitute 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 the 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 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.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of Less than \$100,000 in FY 2005, FY 2006, and FY 2007. No impact on Other State Funds of \$0 in FY 2005, FY 2006, and FY 2007.

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 Skaggs and Deeken; Missouri Center for Independent Living; Governor's Council on Disabilities; Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Barbra Willis; and Michelle Reinkemyer.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that further dissolution of the Blind Pension Fund would be detrimental to persons dependent upon the financial aid it provides.

Testifying against the bill was Sherri Keller.

Roland Tackett, Legislative Analyst