

HCS HB 2031 -- SERVICE DOGS

SPONSOR: Sommer

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Agriculture Policy by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 9 to 0.

This bill specifies that anyone who knowingly represents a dog as a service dog for the purpose of receiving the accommodations afforded service dogs under the Americans with Disabilities Act is guilty of a class C misdemeanor and liable for any actual damages resulting from the impersonation. Any subsequent violation is a class B misdemeanor.

The Commission on Human Rights must use its existing complaint hot line to receive reports of individuals impersonating a person with a disability or representing a dog as a service dog. The commission will refer an alleged violation to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation.

The Governor's Council on Disability must prepare and make available online a placard suitable for posting in a front window or door, stating that service dogs are welcome and that misrepresentation of a service dog is a violation of Missouri law. The department must also create a brochure to help business owners with permissible questions and answers and guidelines defining acceptable behavior.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that people have attempted to pass off their pets as service animals to be allowed to bring them into businesses of all types. This bill would provide businesses in Missouri with a centralized place for information and resources about what rights businesses have in reference to service animals and those with impostor service animals.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Sommer.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.