

HCS HB 2031 -- SERVICE DOGS (Sommer)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on Agriculture Policy

This bill specifies that anyone who knowingly misrepresents 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 misrepresentation. Any subsequent violation is a class B misdemeanor.

This bill also specifies that anyone who knowingly misrepresents an animal as an assistance animal for the purpose of receiving the accommodations afforded assistance animals under the Fair Housing Act is guilty of a class C misdemeanor and liable for any actual damages resulting from the misrepresentation. 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.