



State of Tennessee
PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 910

SENATE BILL NO. 2179

By Henry, Summerville, Faulk, Ford, Overbey

Substituted for: House Bill No. 2695

By Odom, Bass, Lundberg, Ford, White, Lois DeBerry, Kernell, McManus, John Deberry, Lollar, Hardaway, Parkinson, Moore, Towns, Favors

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 39, Chapter 14, Part 2, relative to service animals.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 39, Chapter 14, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

39-14-216.

(a)(1) As used in this section, "service animal" means:

(A) Any animal that is individually trained, or being trained by an employee or puppy raiser from a recognized training agency or school to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability; and

(B) Any police dog, fire dog, search and rescue dog, or police horse.

(2) Other species of animals not specified in this subsection, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition.

(3) For purposes of a service animal as defined under subdivision (a)(1)(A), the work or tasks performed by the service animal must be directly related to the handler's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of the animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of subdivision (a)(1)(A).

(b) It is an offense to knowingly:

(1) Maim or otherwise inflict harm upon a service animal;

(2) Attempt to maim or otherwise inflict harm upon a service animal; or

(3) Permit an animal that the person owns or is in the immediate control of to maim or otherwise inflict harm upon a service animal.

(c) It is an offense to recklessly maim or otherwise inflict harm upon a service animal or permit an animal that the person owns or is in the immediate control of to maim or otherwise inflict harm upon a service animal.

(d) It is an offense to knowingly interfere with a service animal in the performance of its duties, or permit an animal that the person owns or is in control of to interfere with a service animal in the performance of its duties.

(e)(1) A violation of subsection (b) or (c) is a Class A misdemeanor.

(2) A violation of subsection (d) is a Class C misdemeanor.

(f)(1) In addition to any other penalty provided by this section, a person convicted of a violation of subsection (b), (c) or (d) shall be ordered by the court to make full restitution for all damages that arise out of or are related to the offense, including incidental and consequential damages incurred by the service animal's handler or the recognized training agency or school.

(2) Restitution, for purposes of this section, includes:

(A) The value of the service animal if the animal is disabled or can no longer perform service animal duties;

(B) Replacement and training or retraining expenses of the service animal or handler if necessary to restore the animal to service animal capabilities;

(C) Veterinary and other medical and boarding expenses for the service animal;

(D) Medical expenses for the handler; and

(E) Lost wages or income incurred by the handler during any period that the handler is without the services of the service animal.

(g) If the violation of this section involves a guide dog and the offense results in injury to the dog that permanently deprives the owner of the use of the guide dog's services, nothing in this section shall preclude prosecution and conviction for such conduct under § 39-14-208.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2012, the public welfare requiring it.

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PASSED: April 23, 2012



RON RAMSEY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE



BETH HARWELL, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED this 10th day of May 2012



BILL HASLAM, GOVERNOR