



**SUPPORT HB1565 – An Act Relative to the Misrepresentation of a Service Animal
Rep. Kimberly Ferguson (R)**

Referred to Joint Committee on the Judiciary

WHAT THIS BILL DOES:

This bill would provide a decal 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 Massachusetts law and a brochure detailing permissible questions a business owner may ask in order to determine whether a dog is a service dog, proper answers to those questions, and guidelines defining unacceptable behavior. It will develop training and guidelines for law enforcement and animal control personnel regarding implementation and enforcement of this law.

An individual who expressly or impliedly represents that a dog in his or her possession is a service dog or a service-dog-in-training for the purpose of obtaining any rights or privileges afforded to a person with a disability requiring the assistance of a service dog and who knew or should have known that the dog in his or her possession was not a service dog or service-dog-in-training, shall have committed a civil infraction.

The punishment for a first offense is 30 hours of community service for an organization that serves individuals with disabilities, or for another entity or organization at the discretion of the court, to be completed in not more than 6 months, or by a civil fine of not more than \$500, or both such community service and fine; and for any subsequent offenses, by 60 hours of community service for an organization that serves individuals with disabilities, or for another entity or organization at the discretion of the court, to be completed in not more than 6 months, or by a civil fine of not more than \$1,000, or both such community service and fine.

An individual who takes a dog, which the individual knows not to be a service dog or service-dog-in-training, into a place of public accommodation where pets are not permitted, and the dog is wearing a cape, vest, special leash, or other form of identification that states or implies that the dog is a service dog entitled to be present, even if the individual makes no affirmative statements, shall be considered to have violated this subsection.

Any police or animal control officer may investigate and enforce this section by making inquiry of the individual accompanied by the dog in question and issuing a civil citation. Refusal by the individual to answer the permissible questions shall create a presumption that the dog is not a service dog and the officer may issue the citation and require the individual to remove the dog from the place of public accommodation.

WHY YOU SHOULD SUPPORT THIS BILL:

Only those dogs who are true service dogs or a service-dog-in-training should be afforded service dog privileges.

We agree with the American Kennel Club and strongly condemn characterizing dogs as service animals when they are not, or attempting to benefit from a dog's service dog status when the individual using the dog is not a person with a disability.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Massachusetts Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners

Mrs. Rebecca Leonard; 5inWayland@gmail.com; 508-653-6139

Mrs. Julie Rembrandt Seeley; jrembrandtseeley@charter.net; 978-456-8644

05/15/21

HOUSE No. 1565

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Kimberly N. Ferguson

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to the misrepresentation of a service animal.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Kimberly N. Ferguson</i>	<i>1st Worcester</i>	<i>2/19/2021</i>
<i>David F. DeCoste</i>	<i>5th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/19/2021</i>
<i>Joseph D. McKenna</i>	<i>18th Worcester</i>	<i>2/19/2021</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Angelo L. D'Emilia</i>	<i>8th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Paul A. Schmid, III</i>	<i>8th Bristol</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Michael J. Soter</i>	<i>8th Worcester</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>David K. Muradian, Jr.</i>	<i>9th Worcester</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Steven S. Howitt</i>	<i>4th Bristol</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Sarah K. Peake</i>	<i>4th Barnstable</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Steven G. Xiarhos</i>	<i>5th Barnstable</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>David Paul Linsky</i>	<i>5th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Hannah Kane</i>	<i>11th Worcester</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Jessica Ann Giannino</i>	<i>16th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Shawn Dooley</i>	<i>9th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Bradley H. Jones, Jr.</i>	<i>20th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>

<i>Donald R. Berthiaume, Jr.</i>	<i>5th Worcester</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Susan Williams Gifford</i>	<i>2nd Plymouth</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Richard M. Haggerty</i>	<i>30th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Kathleen R. LaNatra</i>	<i>12th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Brian M. Ashe</i>	<i>2nd Hampden</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Steven C. Owens</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Sheila C. Harrington</i>	<i>1st Middlesex</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>Alice Hanlon Peisch</i>	<i>14th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>Paul McMurtry</i>	<i>11th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>Alyson M. Sullivan</i>	<i>7th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>Jeffrey N. Roy</i>	<i>10th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>Linda Dean Campbell</i>	<i>15th Essex</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>Danielle W. Gregoire</i>	<i>4th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>William C. Galvin</i>	<i>6th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>F. Jay Barrows</i>	<i>1st Bristol</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>Mathew J. Muratore</i>	<i>1st Plymouth</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Josh S. Cutler</i>	<i>6th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Kate Lipper-Garabedian</i>	<i>32nd Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>John H. Rogers</i>	<i>12th Norfolk</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Maria Duaine Robinson</i>	<i>6th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Meghan Kilcoyne</i>	<i>12th Worcester</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Nika C. Elugardo</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>David Allen Robertson</i>	<i>19th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>John J. Cronin</i>	<i>Worcester and Middlesex</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>Marcos A. Devers</i>	<i>16th Essex</i>	<i>3/8/2021</i>
<i>Tami L. Gouveia</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/10/2021</i>
<i>John J. Mahoney</i>	<i>13th Worcester</i>	<i>3/16/2021</i>
<i>Sean Garballey</i>	<i>23rd Middlesex</i>	<i>3/18/2021</i>
<i>William J. Driscoll, Jr.</i>	<i>7th Norfolk</i>	<i>4/27/2021</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	<i>5/10/2021</i>

HOUSE No. 1565

By Mrs. Ferguson of Holden, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1565) of Kimberly N. Ferguson and others relative to the misrepresentation of a service animal. The Judiciary.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act relative to the misrepresentation of a service animal.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 272 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official Edition, is hereby
2 amended by inserting after section 98A the following:-

3 Section 98A ½ . (a) As used in this section, the following words shall have the following
4 meanings unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

5 “Disability” has the same meaning as set forth in the deferral “Americans with
6 Disabilities Act of 1990”, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101 et seq., and its related amendments
7 implementing regulations.

8 “Service dog” has the same meaning as set forth in the implementing regulations of Title
9 II and Title III of the federal “Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990”, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101 et
10 seq.

11 “Service-dog-in-training” means a dog or puppy that has been selected for service dog
12 work and is being handled by a service-dog trainer .

13 “Service-dog trainer” means a competent dog trainer who is providing individual training
14 of a dog or puppy with the intention of having the dog or puppy become a working service dog
15 that will perform tasks for a disabled person.

16 (b) Business owners and individuals will continue to be protected under the Americans
17 with Disabilities Act of 1990.

18 (c) Within 6 months of enactment, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services
19 (or designee), in conjunction with a member of a nationally accredited service dog organization,
20 a member of an association advocating for the interests of restaurant owners, and a member of an
21 association advocating for the interests of business owners shall prepare and make available to
22 businesses upon request, (i) a decal suitable for posting in a front window or door, stating that
23 service dogs are welcome and that misrepresentation of a service dog is a violation of
24 Massachusetts law, (ii) a brochure detailing permissible questions a business owner may ask in
25 order to determine whether a dog is a service dog, proper answers to those questions, and
26 guidelines defining unacceptable behavior.

27 (d) Within 6 months of enactment, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services
28 (or designee), in conjunction with a member of a nationally accredited service dog organization,
29 a member of law enforcement appointed by the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, and
30 a member appointed by the Commissioner of the Municipal Police Training Committee shall
31 develop training and guidelines for law enforcement and animal control personnel regarding
32 implementation and enforcement of this law.

33 (e) (1) An individual (i) who expressly or impliedly represents that a dog in his or her
34 possession is a service dog or a service-dog-in-training for the purpose of obtaining any rights or

35 privileges afforded to a person with a disability requiring the assistance of a service dog and (ii)
36 who knew or should have known that the dog in his or her possession was not a service dog or
37 service-dog-in-training, shall have committed a civil infraction, punishable: (i) for a first offense,
38 by 30 hours of community service for an organization that serves individuals with disabilities, or
39 for another entity or organization at the discretion of the court, to be completed in not more than
40 6 months, or by a civil fine of not more than \$500, or both such community service and fine; and
41 (ii) for any subsequent offenses, by 60 hours of community service for an organization that
42 serves individuals with disabilities, or for another entity or organization at the discretion of the
43 court, to be completed in not more than 6 months, or by a civil fine of not more than \$1,000, or
44 both such community service and fine.

45 (2) An individual who takes a dog, which the individual knows not to be a service dog or
46 service-dog-in-training, into a place of public accommodation where pets are not permitted, and
47 the dog is wearing a cape, vest, special leash, or other form of identification that states or implies
48 that the dog is a service dog entitled to be present, even if the individual makes no affirmative
49 statements, shall be considered to have violated this subsection.

50 (3) Any police or animal control officer may investigate and enforce this section by
51 making inquiry of the individual accompanied by the dog in question and issuing a civil citation.
52 Refusal by the individual to answer the permissible questions shall create a presumption that the
53 dog is not a service dog and the officer may issue the citation and require the individual to
54 remove the dog from the place of public accommodation.

55 (f) (1) A violator who receives a citation requiring the payment of a civil fine pursuant to
56 subsection (e) shall within 20 days: (i) pay the civil fine to the municipality in which the

57 violation took place; or (ii) contest responsibility for the violation by sending a signed request for
58 a noncriminal hearing, together with a copy of the citation, a verification of the violator's
59 mailing address and a \$25 court filing fee, to the clerk-magistrate of the district court for the
60 judicial district in which the violation occurred. The citation shall notify the violator of these
61 obligations and provide detailed instructions on how to pay the civil fine or contest
62 responsibility, including the address where payment is to be submitted and the address where a
63 request for a noncriminal hearing is to be submitted. If payment is not made within 20 days, the
64 clerk of the municipality in which the violation took place shall notify the magistrate of the
65 district court that payment of the civil fine was not made.

66 (2) A violator who receives a citation requiring the violator to complete community
67 service shall within 20 days: (i) submit, by mail or in person, a signed letter to the clerk of the
68 municipality in which the violation occurred and a signed letter to the clerk-magistrate of the
69 district court for the judicial district in which the violation occurred verifying the violator's
70 intention to complete such community service and identifying the name of the organization for
71 which the violator would like to complete the community service; or (ii) contest responsibility
72 for the violation by sending a signed request for a noncriminal hearing, together with a copy of
73 the citation, a verification of the violator's mailing address and a \$25 court filing fee, to the
74 clerk-magistrate. The citation shall notify the violator of these obligations and provide the
75 violator with instructions, including the addresses where the letters are to be submitted and the
76 address where a request for a noncriminal hearing is to be submitted. If a citation requires the
77 violator to complete community service and pay a fine, the violator need only send 1 signed
78 request for a noncriminal hearing to contest responsibility under this paragraph and paragraph
79 (1).

80 Upon receiving a signed letter pursuant to clause (i) of the preceding paragraph, the
81 clerk-magistrate shall mail to the violator written instructions and a form to be completed and
82 sent back to the clerk-magistrate to verify the completion of the required community service.

83 (3) Upon receiving a timely request for a noncriminal hearing pursuant to this subsection,
84 the clerk-magistrate shall mail a copy of the request to the municipality in which the violation
85 occurred and schedule a hearing to be held before a magistrate or justice of the district court. The
86 clerk-magistrate shall promptly notify the police agency concerned and the violator of the date
87 and time of the hearing.

88 A violator who does not, within 20 days of the date of the citation, request a noncriminal
89 hearing shall not thereafter be given such a hearing, unless the clerk-magistrate determines that
90 the failure to make such a timely request was for good cause that was not within the control of
91 the violator. The clerk-magistrate's determination of such issue shall be final.

92 If the hearing is conducted by a magistrate other than a justice, either the violator or the
93 police agency concerned may appeal the decision of the magistrate to a justice, who shall hear
94 the case de novo. Any violator so appealing the decision of a magistrate shall be responsible for
95 paying a fee of \$50 prior to the scheduling of the appeal hearing before a justice. There shall be
96 no right of jury trial for a violation of this section.

97 In any such hearing before a magistrate or justice, the citation shall be admissible and
98 shall be prima facie evidence of the facts stated therein. Compulsory process for witnesses may
99 be had by either party in the same manner as in criminal cases. On a showing of need in advance
100 of such hearing, the magistrate or justice may direct that the violator be permitted to inspect

101 specific written documents or materials in the possession of the police officer or agency
102 concerned that are essential to the violator's defense.

103 At the conclusion of the hearing, the magistrate or justice shall announce a finding of
104 responsible or not responsible. The magistrate or justice shall enter a finding of responsible if it
105 was shown by a preponderance of the credible evidence that the violator committed the
106 infraction alleged; otherwise the magistrate or justice shall enter a finding of not responsible.

107 (4) If the violator is found responsible after a noncriminal hearing pursuant to paragraph
108 (3), the magistrate or justice shall order the violator to pay any fine that was directed by the
109 citation within 20 days of the order and complete any community service that was directed by the
110 citation within 180 days of the order.

111 (5) A violator who: (i) fails, pursuant to paragraph (1), to either pay the full amount of the
112 civil fine to the municipality within 20 days of the date of the citation or to request a noncriminal
113 hearing within 20 days of the date of the citation plus such grace period as the clerk-magistrate
114 may allow; (ii) fails, pursuant to paragraph (2), to either submit the signed letters within 20 days
115 of the date of the citation or request a noncriminal hearing within 20 days of the date of the
116 citation plus such grace period as the clerk-magistrate may allow; (iii) fails to complete required
117 community service in a timely manner; (iv) fails to appear for a noncriminal hearing before a
118 magistrate or a justice at the time required after having been given notice of such hearing either
119 personally or by first class mail directed to such violator's mail address as reported by the
120 violator; or (v) fails to comply with an order issued pursuant to paragraph 4, shall be punished by
121 a criminal fine of not more than \$1,000, imprisonment in a jail or house of correction for not
122 more than 6 months, or both such fine and imprisonment.