2007 ASSEMBLY BILL 287


AN ACT to amend 106.52 (1) (fm), 174.055, 951.01 (5), 951.097, 951.18 (2s) and 951.18 (4) (a) 1. d. of the statutes; relating to: the definition of service animal for purposes of discrimination against a person using a service animal in a public accommodation and harassment of a service animal and providing a penalty.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Discrimination against a person using a service animal in a public accommodation

Under current law, a person with a disability may not be refused entrance into or use of a public place of accommodation or amusement (public accommodation) because the person is accompanied by a service animal. For purposes of discrimination against a person using a service animal in a public accommodation, “service animal” is defined as an animal that is individually trained or being trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, including the work or task of guiding a person with impaired vision, alerting a person with impaired hearing to intruders or sound, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.

This bill makes the following changes to the definition of “service animal” that is applicable to discrimination in a public accommodation:

1. A service animal must perform tasks to mitigate a person’s disability rather than do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.
2. The tasks performed must be physical tasks.

3. The example of providing minimal protection or rescue work is deleted.

4. Lending balance support and providing assistance in a medical crisis are added as examples of tasks performed for a person with a disability other than blindness, visual impairment, deafness, or hardness of hearing.

5. The bill specifies that an animal’s presence for comfort, protection, or defense of an individual does not constitute performing a task to mitigate an individual’s disability.

6. The example of guiding a person with impaired vision is changed to guiding a person who is blind or visually impaired.

7. The example of alerting a person with impaired hearing to intruders or sound is changed to alerting a person who is deaf or hard of hearing to specific sounds.

**Prohibition against harassing a service dog and exemption from dog tax**

Under current law, it is a crime to harass a service dog by injuring, killing, or interfering with the service dog. For this crime, “service dog” is defined as, “a dog that is trained for the purpose of assisting a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability or accommodating such a disability.”

This bill prohibits harassing any service animal, not just a service dog, and applies the definition of “service animal” that is applicable to discrimination in a public accommodation, as amended by this bill, to the crime of harassing a service animal.

Also under current law, dog owners must pay a tax for their dogs, except a dog owner is not required to pay the tax for a service dog. The bill adopts the definition of service animal that is applicable to discrimination in a public accommodation for purposes of the service dog exemption from the dog tax.

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**The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:**

**SECTION 1.** 106.52 (1) (fm) of the statutes is amended to read:

106.52 (1) (fm) “Service animal” means a guide dog, signal dog, or other animal that is individually trained or is being trained to do work or perform physical tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, including the work or task of guiding a person with impaired vision, who is blind, as defined in s. 47.01 (1), or visually impaired, as defined in s. 47.01 (5), the task of alerting a person with impaired hearing to intruders or sound, providing minimal protection or rescue work, who is deaf or hard of hearing to specific sounds, and such tasks as pulling a
wheelchair, or fetching lending balance support, picking up dropped items, or providing assistance in a medical crisis for a person with a disability other than blindness, visual impairment, deafness, or hardness of hearing. An animal’s presence for comfort, protection, or defense of a person does not constitute performing a physical task to mitigate a person’s disability.

SECTION 2. 174.055 of the statutes is amended to read:

174.055 Exemption of service dogs for blind, deaf and mobility-impaired. Every dog specially trained to lead blind or deaf persons or to provide support for mobility-impaired persons that is a service animal, as defined in s. 106.52 (1) (fm), is exempt from the dog license tax and every person owning such a dog shall receive annually a free dog license from the local collecting officer upon application.

SECTION 3. 951.01 (5) of the statutes is amended to read:

951.01 (5) “Service dog” means a dog that is trained for the purpose of assisting a person with a sensory, mental, or physical disability or accommodating such a disability animal” has the meaning given in s. 106.52 (1) (fm).

SECTION 4. 951.097 of the statutes is amended to read:

951.097 Harassment of service dogs animals. (1) (a) Any person may provide notice to another person in any manner that the latter person’s behavior is interfering with the use of a service dog animal and may request that the latter person stop engaging in that behavior.

(b) No person, after receiving a notice and request under par. (a) regarding a service dog animal, may do any of the following:

1. Recklessly interfere with the use of the service dog animal by obstructing or intimidating it or otherwise jeopardizing its safety or the safety of its user.
2. Intentionally interfere with the use of the service dog by obstructing or intimidating it or otherwise jeopardizing its safety or the safety of its user.

(2) (a) No person may recklessly allow his or her dog to interfere with the use of a service dog by obstructing or intimidating it or otherwise jeopardizing its safety or the safety of its user.

(b) No person may intentionally allow his or her dog to interfere with the use of a service dog by obstructing or intimidating it or otherwise jeopardizing its safety or the safety of its user.

(3) (a) No person may recklessly injure a service dog or recklessly allow his or her dog to injure a service dog.

(b) No person may intentionally injure a service dog or intentionally allow his or her dog to injure a service dog.

(4) (a) No person may recklessly cause the death of a service dog.

(b) No person may intentionally cause the death of a service dog.

(5) No person may take possession of or exert control over a service dog without the consent of its owner or user and with the intent to deprive another of the use of the service dog.

SECTION 5. 951.18 (2s) of the statutes is amended to read:

951.18 (2s) Any person who violates s. 951.097 (1) (b) 1. or (2) (a), knowing that the dog that is the victim is a service dog, is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor. Any person who violates s. 951.097 (1) (b) 2., (2) (b), or (3) (a), knowing that the dog that is the victim is a service dog, is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. Any person who violates s. 951.097 (3) (b) or (4) (a), knowing that the dog that is the victim is a service dog, is guilty of a Class I felony. Any
person who violates s. 951.097 (4) (b) or (5), knowing that the dog animal that is the victim is a service dog animal, is guilty of a Class H felony.

**SECTION 6.** 951.18 (4) (a) 1. d. of the statutes is amended to read:

951.18 (4) (a) 1. d. In a case under s. 951.095 or 951.097, the value of a replacement animal, if the affected animal is incapacitated or dead; the cost of training a replacement animal; or the cost of retraining the affected animal. The court shall base any determination of the value of a replacement service dog animal on the value of the service dog animal to the user and not on its cost or fair market value.

**SECTION 7. Initial applicability.**

(1) This act first applies to acts or omissions that occur on the effective date of this subsection.