



RACHAEL A. CABRAL-GUEVARA

STATE SENATOR • 19TH SENATE DISTRICT

Testimony before the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform

Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara

January 24, 2023

Hello, members of the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on Assembly Bill 752, an important bill that will waive dog licensing fees for all service dog owners.

Current law requires municipalities to charge a dog licensing fee to all dog owners with few exceptions. Included in these exceptions are some, but not all, types of service dogs. Specifically, service dogs trained to assist blind, deaf, or mobility-impaired individuals are exempt. This excludes other types of trained service dogs such as a seizure response dog or diabetic alert dog.

This bill would broaden the current definition of “service animal” to include guide dogs, signal dogs, or other animals trained to perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. Additionally, this bill will waive dog licensing fees for service dog owners, so that they may receive a dog license annually for free.

Not only would these actions remove an unnecessary burden for individuals with disabilities, but they would also align Wisconsin law with federal ADA guidelines.

I am hopeful you will be able to support this important piece of legislation that will end the additional fees on individuals with certain disabilities.



NATE GUSTAFSON

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 55TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 752

Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Sortwell, and esteemed members of the Assembly Committee on Regulatory Licensing Reform, for scheduling this public hearing and providing me with the opportunity to testify in favor of Assembly Bill 752. I also want to express my appreciation to my colleague, Senator Cabral-Guevara, for her leadership on this bill in the Senate. This bill's Senate companion passed the Senate by a voice vote on January 16th.

Under current law, every dog specifically trained to lead blind or deaf persons or to provide support for mobility-impaired persons is exempt from the dog license tax, and every person owning such a dog receives a free dog license annually from the local collecting officer upon application. Assembly Bill 752 extends these exemptions to include every service dog.

Under the bill, a service animal is a guide dog, signal dog, or another animal that is individually trained or is being trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual 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.

Service dogs undergo training to address a variety of health issues, including assistance with seizures, diabetes, autism, allergies, or psychiatric problems. In many cases, service dogs are integral for day-to-day activities.



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Consider the case of Jesse Lovell, a veteran from Sheboygan grappling with PTSD and hearing loss following combat. Jesse found Oliver, “a spunky dog who knows when someone needs love and compassion”. After finding Oliver, Lovell is thriving and is grateful to have a service dog to make his life easier.

The "dog tax" varies across Wisconsin. Assembly Bill 752 proposes to bring the "dog tax" down to zero for every service dog.

I urge you to vote for Assembly Bill 752. Your careful attention to this matter is greatly appreciated, and I trust that you will recognize the positive impact Assembly Bill 752 can have on our constituents and our state as a whole.

Thank you for your time and consideration.