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**Scott Lipps**  
State Representative

Committees

Federalism, Vice Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Finance Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Development, and  
Natural Resources

**Sponsor Testimony on HB 303**  
**The Ohio House Economic Development, Commerce, and Labor Committee**

Thank you Chairman Young, Vice Chair DeVitis, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan & members of the House Economic Development, Commerce, & Labor Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to speak regarding House Bill 303. This legislation would update the Ohio Revised Code concerning service animals & public accommodations and bring the ORC in line with federal law and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Not only does House Bill 303 update Ohio's language, but it also strengthens the right of the disabled to use service animals in places of public accommodation. While working on this bill, we heard stories from a compliance officer, responsible for service animals in OSU's dormitories. He related to us stories about students—on formal applications—claiming all sorts of animals as service animals...parrots, lizards, tarantulas and more. This illustrates the need to properly define a service animal as an animal that actually provides a service such as leading the blind, alerting the deaf or protecting an epileptic. A service animal is NOT a pet. Representative Kelly and I met with representatives from the National Federation of the Blind (Cincinnati Office). There were two certified service dogs present. We never knew they were in the room. They are trained, working animals...not pets. They provide a service to those in need. The animals in our dormitory anecdote are untrained; however, people are able to abuse the current code to claim special accommodations for these pets (not service animals).

Often, untrained pets interfere with animals working as a service animal. To assist with this dilemma, the bill establishes that falsely claiming an animal is a service animal in a place of public accommodation—or prohibiting use of a service animal by an individual with a disability—is a second degree misdemeanor.

I would like to thank the committee for their time and consideration and would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.