

HB 263 Opposition Testimony by Valerie Slayman

Chairman Young, Ranking Member LePore-Hagan and members of the House Economic Development, Commerce and Labor Committee.

My name is Valerie Slayman and I would like to provide you written testimony on HB 263.

While I am the owner of a service dog that accompanies me everywhere, I do not feel all dogs should have access to patio seating at restaurants.

I feel this would pose many issues not only to the restaurant but also to the patrons and their canine friends.

One of issues would be access to the patio. How many outdoor patios have a separate entrance? The dog owner would not be able to parade through the restaurant in order to enter the patio. This would be a health code violation.

While many people think it would be wonderful to be able to bring their dog to dinner, I do not. While an animal may behave in the comfort of their home environment, many will not when faced with being around other dogs and having the smell of food lurking in the background. How easy it would be to have a dog jump up and snatch a hamburger off the plate of a fellow diner then what happens?

A trip to the emergency room if the dog happens to bite the patron in the process, then everyone has a whole new set of problems.

Consider what might happen if a child is running past a dog and happens to step on their tail? The animal will react and again we have the possibility of seeing the ER doctor again not to mention your lawyer.

And let's not forget about dogs and how they protect their territory. Dogs will become aggressive for no reason. Do we know which dogs will do this? Not really. Your dog at home could become a little cranky if provoked.

Sanitation would be another factor involved. I think we all know what that problem might be.

Another situation to contemplate is what the dog owner will do if their canine companion is thirsty or hungry. Some owners would not think twice as to taking a plate or bowl from the table and adding water or food to it, then passing it to the pet. Imagine your thoughts as you eat off the same dinnerware that could have been used to feed your neighbor's dog. Some of us would not like that.

While I have covered only a few scenarios here, there are many more that can happen and not all of them will be favorable. Please remember you are asking a non-trained dog to be in an environment they are not used to, surrounded by other dogs they do not know, children and food. If that is not an accident waiting to happen, I do not know what is.

In closing, I know my service dog Stewart and I would NEVER eat at a restaurant that allows non-trained dogs. I love my service dog, and would never put him in harm's way.

Thank you for your time.