



County Auditors' Association of Ohio

66 East Lynn Street • Columbus, Ohio 43215 • (614) 228-2226 • Fax: (614) 228-8901 • www.caaao.org

JON A. SLATER, JR.
Fairfield County
President

Testimony of the County Auditors' Association of Ohio

HB 558

House Armed Service, Veterans Affairs & Homeland Security Committee

May 22, 2018

ALAN HAROLD
Stark County
Vice President

JULIE A. ADKINS
Seneca County
Second Vice President

ANDREA L. WEAVER
Union County
Third Vice President

WILLIAM D. McFARLAND
Washington County
Secretary/Treasurer

FRANCES S. LESSER, Esq.
Executive Director

BETTY S. DEVER
Assistant Director

THOMAS P. PAPPAS, Esq.
Legislative Counsel

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chairman Perales, Ranking Member Craig and Members of the House Armed Service, Veterans Affairs & Homeland Security Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to express the County Auditors' Association of Ohio's (CAAO) support and suggestion to a very worthwhile piece of legislation that is intended to make life easier for our disabled veterans. It should go without saying that we appreciate their service to our country and acknowledge their sacrifice. Providing these brave men and women with a free registration license for an assistance dog is the least we can do.

The bill adds a provision to current definition of "mobility impaired person" to include, "A person who is a veteran of the armed forces of the United States, including reserve components thereof, or of the national guard, who has been discharged or released from active duty in the armed forces under honorable conditions, and who has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or any other service-related disability". The CAAO wholeheartedly supports this addition.

Continuing law defines a service dog as, "a dog that has been trained or is in training to assist a mobility impaired person" and defines assistance dog as, "a guide dog, hearing dog, or service dog that has been trained by a nonprofit special agency".

Continuing law specifies that this exempt registration is permanent and not subject to annual renewal. Certificates and tags stamped "Ohio Assistance Dog-Permanent Registration", with registration number, shall be issued upon registration of such a dog. We anticipate that the new provision for veterans will increase the number of applications for exemption from any fee for registration. Since the applicant is required to show proof that the dog is an assistance dog and has been trained by a nonprofit special agency, County Auditors request some guidance on the type of certification or other proof that the dog has been trained as an assistance dog and a definition of "nonprofit special agency".

County Auditors believe this addition will assist in insuring that the dog is properly trained to serve the needs of not only the disabled veteran but all service dogs. We hope you will consider adding such guidance. Thank you very much for the opportunity to address you and for your kind attention.