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An Act To Amend the Definition of "Service Animal" To Conform with Federal Law

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §4553, sub-§9-D, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 664, §1, is repealed.

Sec. 2. 5 MRSA §4553, sub-§9-E is enacted to read:

9-E. Service animal. "Service animal" means:

A. For the purposes of subchapter 4:

(1) An animal that has been determined necessary to mitigate the effects of a physical or mental disability by a physician, psychologist, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner or licensed social worker; or

(2) An animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a physical or mental disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to intruders or sounds, providing reasonable protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair or retrieving dropped items; and

B. For the purposes of subchapter 5, a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of such work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting an individual who is totally or partially blind with navigation and other tasks, alerting an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing nonviolent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting an individual to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or a telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to an individual with a mobility disability and helping a person with a psychiatric or neurological disability by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition.

Sec. 3. 7 MRSA §3907, sub-§24-A, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 664, §10, is amended to read:

24-A. Service dog. "Service dog" means a dog that meets the definition of "service animal" set forth in Title 5, section 4553, subsection 9#D9#E, paragraph A or B.

Sec. 4. 7 MRSA §3961-A, last ¶, as amended by PL 2007, c. 664, §13, is further amended to read:

For the purposes of this section, "service animal" has the same meaning as set forth in Title 5, section 4553, subsection 9#D9#E, paragraph A or B.

Sec. 5. 17 MRSA §1011, sub-§24-A, as enacted by PL 2007, c. 664, §16, is amended to read:

24-A. Service dog. "Service dog" means a dog that meets the definition of "service animal" set forth in Title 5, section 4553, subsection 9#D9#E, paragraph A or B.

Sec. 6. 17 MRSA §1312, sub-§7, as amended by PL 2007, c. 664, §20, is further amended to read:

7. Service dog; definition. As used in this section, "service dog" means a dog that meets the definition of "service animal" in Title 5, section 4553, subsection 9#D9#E, paragraph B.

Sec. 7. 17 MRSA §1313, as amended by PL 2007, c. 664, §21, is further amended to read:

§ 1313.Motor vehicle drivers

The driver of a vehicle approaching a totally or partially blind or otherwise physically disabled pedestrian who is carrying a cane predominantly white or metallic in color, with or without a red tip, or using a service dog as defined in section 1312, subsection 7 shall take all necessary precautions to avoid injury to that blind or otherwise physically disabled pedestrian, and any driver who fails to take such precautions is liable in damages for any injury caused the pedestrian. A totally or partially blind or otherwise physically disabled pedestrian, not carrying such a cane or using a service dog in any of the places, accommodations or conveyances listed in section 1312, has all of the rights and privileges conferred by law upon other persons, and the failure of a totally or partially blind or otherwise physically disabled pedestrian to carry such a cane or to use a service dog in any such places, accommodations or conveyances may not be held to constitute nor be evidence of contributory negligence.

Sec. 8. 17 MRSA §1314-A, as amended by PL 2007, c. 664, §22, is further amended to read:

§ 1314-A.Misrepresentation of service dog

A person who fits a dog with a harness, collar, vest or sign of the type commonly used by blind persons in order to represent that the dog is a service dog or commonly used by persons with disabilities to represent that the dog is a service dog when training of the type that guide dogs normally receive has not been provided or when the dog does not meet the definition of "service dog" as defined in section 1312, subsection 7 commits a civil violation for which a fine of not more than \$500 may be adjudged.

Sec. 9. 17 MRSA §3966, last ¶, as amended by PL 2007, c. 664, §23, is further amended to read:

For the purposes of this section, "service animal" has the same meaning as set forth in Title 5, section 4553, subsection 9#D9#E, paragraph A or B.

Effective 90 days following adjournment of the 125th
Legislature, First Regular Session, unless otherwise indicated.