Talking Points for AB 1705

Overview:

Assembly Business and Professions Committee will hear AB 1705 on April 25.    The bill extends the life of the Guide dog board of California until January 1, 2022. We are opposing its extension and working for its repeal.

Committee Chair

Assembly Business and Professions Committee

Evan Low Dem Cupertino RM 4126

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[Assemblymember.low@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:Assemblymember.low@assembly.ca.gov)

Action Needed:

\*Write to the Committee Chair and each committee member below. But particularly make sure to get a letter or email to the committee chair, Evan Low.

\*Call the Committee, phone: [916.319.3301](tel:(916)%20319-3301) and share talking points with the person who answers.

\*Send emails to [Elissa.Silva@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Elissa.Silva@asm.ca.gov). Elissa is the Consultant for the Assembly Business and Professions Committee.

\*Plan to attend the April 25 hearing.  Room 4202 at 9:00 am.   Contact Shannon Dillon at 415-218-5862 for more information or if you will attend the hearing on April 25.

\*Please feel free to share your email or letter with Shannon Dillon at [shannonldillon@gmail.com](mailto:shannonldillon@gmail.com).

Talking Points:

The California State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind is a regulatory body created by the Legislature in 1947. It was established at a time when guidance and regulation of guide dog school programs in the State of California was deemed necessary. The Board states that public protection is the Board’s highest priority.

But the Board has fought against consumers who tried to make changes that would help guide dog users.

In 2016, consumers/guide dog handlers authored a Bill, Senate Bill1331,   to allow out-of-state guide dog schools to provide follow up services, an important consumer need.  Before SB 1331, the board was denying California residents access to the follow-up services provided by out-of-state schools which were not licensed by the Board. Denying follow-up services endangered guide dog teams. It also limited the choice of guide dog schools available to consumers living in California. Rather than choosing a school that met their needs and goals, guide dog users would have to choose a school that could provide follow-up services in California.

The Board opposed this bill, and yet Senate Bill 1331 was passed unanimously in both Houses, and was signed by the Governor.

Senate Bill 1331 also required the Board to post a Fact Sheet on its web site describing the purpose of the Board. Why did it take a Senate Bill to require the Board to post a simple Fact Sheet to explain the purpose?

Today, the majority of guide dog schools are members of the International Guide Dog Federation, (I.G.D.F.), which accredits guide dog school programs and monitors programs in the United States and internationally. The Board used I.G.D.F. standards as a guide for their own best practices.

No other state has a board, and yet there is no evidence that out-of-state schools perform significantly worse with respect to their instruction than California schools. Schools self-regulate in an appropriate manner through the IGDF. The board has out-lived its usefulness, and the three schools in this state do not need to be regulated to provide high quality instruction. Further, schools from out of state should not have to have a license to provide guide dogs and guide dog instruction to guide dog users in California. Guide dog users should choose schools that meet their needs and goals. They should not have to worry about whether a school is licensed by the Board.

Eliminating the Guide Dog Board is the right decision for guide dog handlers and for all involved.

We urge you to vote NO on AB 1705.

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To phone the committee, call [916.319.3301](tel:(916)%20319-3301). To write other members, address letters to the room number given with each name, State Capitol, Sacramento, 95814. You may also call the member phone numbers given below.

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