**Current law**

**955.43 Dogs with blind, deaf or mobility impaired person.**

(A) When either a blind, deaf or hearing impaired, or mobility impaired person or a trainer of a assistance dog is accompanied by a service dog , the person or the trainer, as applicable, is entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of all public conveyances, hotels, lodging places, all places of public accommodation, amusement, or resort, all institutions of education, and other places to which the general public is invited, and may take the dog into such conveyances and places, subject only to the conditions and limitations applicable to all persons not so accompanied, except that:

(1) The dog shall not occupy a seat in any public conveyance.

(2) The dog shall be upon a leash while using the facilities of a common carrier.

(3) Any dog in training to become an assistance dog shall be covered by a liability insurance policy provided by the nonprofit special agency enga ged in such work protecting members of the public against personal injury or property damage caused by the dog.

(B) No person shall deprive a blind, deaf or hearing impaired, or mobility impaired person or a trainer of an assistance dog who is accompanied by an assistance dog of any of the advantages, facilities, or privileges provided in division (A) of this section, nor charge the person or trainer a fee or charge for the dog.

(C) As used in this section, "institutions of education" means:

(1) Any state university or college as defined in section 3345.32 of the Revised Code;

(2) Any private college or university that holds a certificate of authorization issued by the Ohio board of regents pursuant to Chapter 1713. of the Revised Code;

(3) Any elementary or secondary school operated by a board of education;

(4) Any chartered or nonchartered nonpublic elementary or secondary school;

(5) Any school issued a certificate of registration by the state board of career colleges and schools.

Effective Date: 04-03-2003; 06-30-2006

Proposed changes

(d) "Service animal" means an animal that is trained to perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The tasks may include, but are not limited to,

guiding a person who is visually impaired or blind, alerting a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, pulling a wheelchair, assisting with mobility or balance, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, retrieving objects, or performing other special tasks. A service animal is not a pet. In addition, assistance dogs and emotional support dogs are not defined as service animals.

(2) An individual with a disability is entitled to full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges in all public accommodations.

This section does not require any person, firm, business, or corporation, or any agent thereof, to modify or provide any vehicle, premises, facility, or service to a higher degree of accommodation than is required for a person not so disabled.

(3) An individual with a disability has the right to be accompanied by a service animal in all areas of a public accommodation that the public or customers are normally permitted to occupy.

(a) Documentation that the service animal is trained is not a precondition for providing service to an individual accompanied by a service animal. A public accommodation may ask if an animal is a service animal or what tasks the animal has been trained to perform in order to determine the difference between

a service animal and a pet.

(b) A public accommodation may not impose a deposit or surcharge on an individual with a disability as a precondition to permitting a service animal to accompany the individual with a disability, even if a deposit is routinely required for pets.

(c) An individual with a disability is liable for damage caused by a service animal if it is the regular policy and practice of the public accommodation to charge nondisabled persons for damages caused by their pets.

(d) The care or supervision of a service animal is the responsibility of the individual owner. A public accommodation is not required to provide care or food or a special location for the service animal or assistance with removing animal excrement.

(e) A public accommodation may exclude or remove any animal from the premises, including a service animal, if the animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others. Allergies and fear of animals are not valid reasons for denying access or refusing service to an individual with a

service animal. If a service animal is excluded or removed for being a direct threat to others, the public accommodation must provide the individual with a disability the option of continuing access to the public accommodation without having the service animal on the premises.

(4) Any person, firm, or corporation, or the agent of any person, firm, or corporation, who denies or interferes with admittance to, or enjoyment of, a public accommodation or otherwise interferes with the rights of an individual with a disability or the trainer of a service animal while engaged in the

training of such an animal commits a misdemeanor of the third degree,

(b) An individual with a disability who has a service animal or who obtains a service animal is entitled to full and equal access to all housing accommodations provided for in this section, and such a person may not be required to pay extra compensation for the service animal. However, such a person is liable for any damage done to the premises or to another person on the premises by such an animal. A housing accommodation may request proof of compliance with vaccination requirements.

 (8) Any trainer of a service animal, while engaged in the training of such an animal, has the same rights and privileges with respect to access to public facilities and the same liability for damage as is provided for those persons described in subsection (3) accompanied by service animals.

A person who knowingly and willfully misrepresents herself or himself, through conduct or verbal or written notice, as using a service animal and being qualified to use a service animal or as a trainer of a service animal commits a misdemeanor of the second degree.

Current punishment is a misdemeanor of the 4th degree, up to 30 days in prison and $250.00 fine. Consider changing to 3rd degree, fine up to $500.00 or 2nd degree misdemeanor with fine up to $750.00. All carry prison sentence of varying amounts.