

SENATE BILL 2179

By Henry

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 39,
Chapter 14, Part 2, relative to service animals.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 39, Chapter 14, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

39-14-216.

(a)

(1) As used in this section, "service dog" means any dog that is individually trained, or being trained by an employee or puppy raiser from a recognized training agency or school 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 dogs for the purposes of this subsection (a).

(2) The work or tasks performed by a service dog must be directly related to the handler's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical

support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities 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 subsection (a).

(b) It is an offense to knowingly:

(1) Maim or otherwise inflict harm upon a service dog;

(2) Attempt to maim or otherwise inflict harm upon a service dog;

or

(3) Permit a dog that the person owns or is in the immediate control of to maim or otherwise inflict harm upon a service dog.

(c) It is an offense to recklessly maim or otherwise inflict harm upon a service dog or permit a dog that the person owns or is in the immediate control of to maim or otherwise inflict harm upon a service dog.

(d) It is an offense to knowingly interfere with a service dog in the performance of its duties, or permit a dog that the person owns or is in control of to interfere with a service dog in the performance of its duties.

(e)

(1) A violation of subsection (b) is a Class A misdemeanor punishable by fine only of five hundred dollars (\$500).

(2) A violation of subsection (c) is a Class A misdemeanor punishable by fine only of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250).

(3) A violation of subsection (d) is a Class C misdemeanor punishable by fine only fifty dollars (\$50.00).

(f)

(1) In addition to any other penalty provided by this section, a person convicted of a violation of subsection (b), (c) or (d) shall be ordered by the court to make full restitution for all damages that arise out of or are related to the offense, including incidental and consequential damages incurred by the service dog's handler or the recognized training agency or school.

(2) Restitution, for purposes of this section, includes:

(A) The value of the service dog if the dog is disabled or can no longer perform service dog duties;

(B) Replacement and training or retraining expenses of the service dog or handler if necessary to restore the dog to service dog capabilities;

(C) Veterinary and other medical and boarding expenses for the service dog;

(D) Medical expenses for the handler; and

(E) Lost wages or income incurred by the handler during any period that the handler is without the services of the service animal.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2012, the public welfare requiring it.