

The American Legion



OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

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March 28, 2018

The Honorable Richard Burr
United States Senate
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Burr:

On behalf of the 2 million members of The American Legion, we are pleased to express support for the draft bill, as currently written, amending Title 49 – the Air Carriers Access Act.

In recent years, an increase in the abuse of accommodations to individuals with service animals has caused a negative disproportional effect on veterans with legitimate service animals. Airlines have reported cases of individuals attempting to board with peacocks, snakes, and other animals. Such abuse creates a status quo that delegitimizes the work and tasks performed by qualified service animals. For a veteran with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Acute Anxiety, a properly trained service animal can have a significant impact on the well-being of the veteran. Untrained service animals have reportedly defecated onboard airplanes, often bark and attack trained service animals and interrupt the important work of a trained service animal.

This bill would align the definition of a service animal to that in the same as the Americans with Disabilities Act. The alignment would provide more concrete standards and qualifications to what qualifies as a service animal and establish requirements for a standard of service. The bill further provides penalties to those who make false statements to an air carrier in an attempt to receive accommodations. This bill makes significant strides in establishing the difference between a “service animal” and an “emotional support animal.”

Through American Legion Resolution No. 74, passed in 2017, we support legislation that better protects the rights of passengers with disabilities in air transportation, which includes a significant number of veterans and servicemembers.

The American Legion sincerely appreciates your leadership and support of our servicemembers and veterans.

For God and Country,

DENISE H. ROHAN
National Commander