

Bill to Crackdown on misrepresentation in Assistance/Service Animal in Housing Moves through PA House

The "Assistance Animal Integrity Act" unanimously passed the Urban Affairs committee in the PA House of Representatives last month. The purpose of this legislation is to crack down on fraudulent misrepresentations of the need for a service animal and/or emotional support animal and to provide guidance to landlords in evaluating such requests for reasonable accommodation. Pursuant to HB 2049, a misrepresentation of the entitlement to an assistance animal would be a third degree misdemeanor and could result in a fine of up to \$1,000. Additionally, if the disability or disability-related need is not readily apparent, the bill requires that any such reasonable accommodation request be in writing and landlords may request reliable documentation based on "direct knowledge" that describes the person's disability and disability-related need for an assistance animal. Also, rental owners would be immune from liability for injuries caused by a resident's assistance or service animals that are on the property as a reasonable accommodation. AAMP will continue to actively follow and support this proposed service/assistance animal legislation to protect the interests of AAMP members.