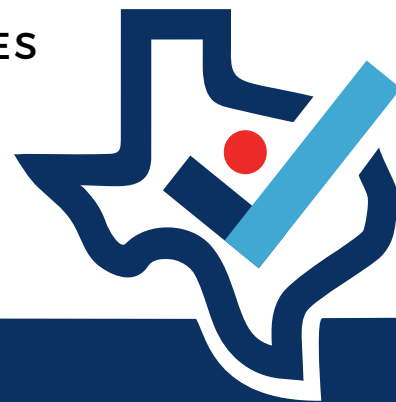


# House Bill (HB) 5206

Rep. Vikki Goodwin



## Ending False Representation of Service Animals

HB 5206 would prohibit the false representation of an animal as a service animal, making it a misdemeanor offense punishable by up to \$1,000 and 30 hours of community service.

It would require certain businesses to provide written notice indicating that their products do not entitle a pet owner to the rights of those with service animals, and that false representation is a misdemeanor.

It would provide a statutory definition of "emotional support animal" help eliminate confusion over the term, and require health care practitioners to follow certain guidelines when providing recommendations on whether an individual needs an emotional support animal.



Service animals are specially trained to provide assistance to their owners with disabilities.

Unfortunately, some individuals falsely claim that their untrained animals are service animals. This can put people and other animals at risk, and can harm the reputation of legitimate service animals.



In its Report to the 88th Texas Legislature, the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities identifies areas of confusion related to service animals.

The GCPD's list of recommendations include some of the provisions found in HB 5206.



Supporters of the bill include Assistance Dogs International; Canine Companions; the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Service Dogs, Inc.; and the Mayor's Office of the City of Houston; among others.

*"Seeing all of these untrained animals masquerading ... just changes the public's view. So they see a dog in a vest and they no longer think to themselves this is something that's important, [or] this is something that is helping someone..."*

*[HB] 5206 is aiming to take a stand against the service dog fraud in the eyes of the public..."*

Public Testimony to the  
House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence,  
April 2023

