

SUPPORT DISABLED VETERANS, CITIZENS, & BUSINESS OWNERS

THE PROBLEM

An increasing number of injured and disabled Pennsylvanians, including military veterans, with service dogs face skepticism and criticism from business owners and other patrons due to bad experiences with pets that have been misrepresented as service animals. Unfortunately, this has happened to nearly all of our Veterans.

While business owners may understand what a service dog is, many are unaware of their rights and options when faced with a misrepresented 'service dog.' To better support them, we recommend the following:

- Increase Education and Awareness
- Institute a State Service Animal Patch
- Deter the Misrepresentation of Service Animals

Why it Matters to Pennsylvania

[PA has the fourth-largest Veterans' population](#) in the country, and nearly 18% of those Veterans have a service-connected disability, including PTSD which impacts nearly 7% of Veterans.

For Veterans with PTSD, [studies](#) have shown that those with service animals have less suicidal ideation and see more symptom improvement than those without them.

SOLUTIONS

Increase Education and Awareness

The federal and state laws that protect service dogs are different from the ones that apply to emotional support and other animals. For this reason, it would be helpful to create and implement a robust public education campaign around the rights and responsibilities that service animals have.

Institute a State Service Animal Patch

We recommend Pennsylvania provide a free, voluntary patch and ID card to applicants with trained, accredited service dogs. The patch and card would be for visual recognition only and would not provide the animal or handler with any additional legal privileges or protections.

Deter the Misrepresentation of Service Animals

In 2018, Gov. Wolf signed into law the [Assistance and Service Animal Integrity Act](#). This statute protects housing communities by prohibiting false representation of a pet as a service animal for accommodation. Unfortunately, this protection does not currently extend to restaurants, hotels, public transportation, or places of business.

A more comprehensive law would deter people with non-service dogs from bringing them into business where they do not belong.

CONTACT US

 WWW.TEAMFOSTER.ORG

 US@TEAMFOSTER.ORG

CONNECT WITH US
FOR MORE
INFORMATION ON
WAYS TO GET
INVOLVED!

 WWW.TEAMFOSTER.ORG

 US@TEAMFOSTER.ORG

 [@WEARETEAMFOSTER](https://www.facebook.com/WEARETEAMFOSTER)



TEAM FOSTER

EST. 2014

Many of America's Veterans are fighting a battle invisible to the naked eye, often as the result of PTSD, traumatic brain injuries and related mental health issues. There is a resource with proven success: service dogs. **Team Foster is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that raises money to provide accredited, life-saving service dogs to injured and disabled Veterans.**

Team Foster also **leads the field to educate our community** about the challenges our Veterans face, the power of service dogs, and why it is important to understand the rights and requirements surrounding service dogs.

Service dogs are a vital asset and few official resources have been dedicated to connect Veterans with service dogs. Properly training a service dog takes **2 years and costs \$30,000+**. Team Foster bridges that gap to ensure that Veterans get access to high quality, life-saving service dogs.

125,000

Veterans have died
by suicide since
September 11, 2001.

1,665

Veterans helped
through our training
partners'
animal-assisted
therapy.

\$1,820,000

Raised by Team Foster
to serve Veterans in
need and their
service dogs.

500+

Veterans paired
with service dogs
through our training
partners.