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[Insert Date]

The Honorable [Insert Name]

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative [Insert Name]:

I am writing on behalf of [Insert name of your organization] in strong support of **H.R. 3103**, **the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers (PAWS) Act of 2019**, which would “direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a grant program under which the Secretary shall make grants to private entities for the provision of service dogs to eligible veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).”

[Insert name of your organization] is a supporter of important research on the health benefits of the human-animal bond. [Insert information about your organization, establishing that you are constituents, e.g. where you are located, what you do, number of employees]. We are strong believers in the power of animals to help and to heal, which is why we support this legislation.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) studies have shown that PTSD affects more than 250,000 (30 percent) of post 9-11 war veterans[[1]](#endnote-1). With an alarming 22 suicides per day[[2]](#endnote-2), we are dealing with an urgent crisis. America’s veterans deserve every therapeutic treatment or service available to them, including the healing power and support of service animals.

Peer-reviewed scientific research, which we helped fund through our support of the Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI), shows the benefits of service animals for veterans with post-traumatic stress. Results from this recently-published, HABRI-funded study on the effects of service dogs on mental health and wellness in military veterans with PTSD indicate that those with a service dog exhibit significantly lower overall PTSD symptom severity, including increased overall psychological well-being; a better ability to cope with flashbacks and anxiety attacks; a lower frequency of nightmares and less overall sleep disturbance; lower overall anxiety, depression, and anger; higher levels of companionship and social reintegration; and lower levels of social isolation.

It is also important to note that service animals, unlike emotional support animals, are allowed full public access under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This is especially important for veterans with PTSD, as symptoms can often manifest themselves while veterans are out in public. ADA regulations already recognize PTSD service dogs because they are trained to perform specific actions and can provide effective interventions whenever and wherever they are needed.

Veterans with post-traumatic stress deserve the support of great service dogs and they deserve our support. Please co-sponsor and work to pass H.R. 3103 as an important step in supporting the health and well-being of America’s veterans.

Sincerely,

[Insert your Name]

[Insert your Title, Organization Name]

1. “Analysis of VA Health Care Utilization among Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) Veterans – Revised”. Office of Public Health. 1 Dec. 2012. Web. http://www.publichealth.va.gov/docs/epidemiology/healthcare-utilization-report-fy2012-qtr3.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. “Suicide Data Report” Department of Veterans Affairs Mental Health Services, Suicide Prevention Program. 2012. Web. <http://www.va.gov/opa/docs/Suicide-Data-Report-2012-final.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)