

Testimony in support of HF688:

Can Do Canines has been around since 1989 and we're one of the largest assistance dog organizations in the country. We serve people with mobility challenges, seizure disorders, deafness or severe hearing loss, Type 1 diabetes and childhood autism. We also place dogs in facilities like Children's Hospital.

We rely on private donations (not government money and estimate that it costs about \$45,000 to raise and train each of our dogs. We give those dogs away free of charge because few of our clients could even come close to affording that cost.

We have 50 employees, but rely very heavily on volunteers to help us raise, train and socialize these dogs over about a 2 ½ to 3 year period. Some of those volunteers are inmates in nine different MN and WI prisons who raise dogs for us, but even more are individuals and families throughout Minnesota who love and raise these dogs and then give them back to us so they can change someone's life.

Our volunteers are amazing and allow us to do what we do.

Our volunteers host dogs anywhere from a few days to over two years at a time. Over the years, we've had potential volunteers who wanted to raise dogs for us, but despite owning their home, their HOA prohibited them from doing that based on general rules about pet dogs.

We're asking that the law prohibiting HOAs from restricting active service dogs in people's homes be extended to service dogs in training. It will allow us and organizations like us in MN to recruit more volunteers and ultimately change more lives.

We've learned recently of some misunderstandings about this bill. It will in no way restrict anyone's existing rights to own, raise or train assistance dogs. It will simply create more opportunities for volunteers to train assistance dogs in their homes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jeff Johnson
Executive Director
Can Do Canines
jjohnson@candocanines.org
763-331-3000