



CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND
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June 15, 2016

Assemblywoman Ling Ling Chang
State Capitol, Room 3149
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1824 – Support

Dear Assemblywoman Chang:

On April 8, 2015, the California State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind (Board) voted to support AB 1824 (Chang) (as introduced February 08, 2016) if amended. On May 9, 2016, the Board voted to recommend that the word “intentionally” be replaced with “willfully or recklessly”. On May 31, 2016 the bill was amended to reflect the Board’s recommendation.

I would like to express my appreciation of your concern for the guide dog using community. I am writing to you on behalf of the Board to express support for AB 1824 in its current form.

This bill would remove the requirement that a guide, signal, or service dog be in discharge of its duties when injury or death occurs by an individual intentionally harming the dog, or by an individual permitting their dog to harm the guide, signal, or service dog. Additionally this bill would make the convicted individual responsible to pay restitution for medical or medical-related expenses, or for loss of wages or income, incurred by the person as a direct result of the crime.

The Board is in full support of stricter penalties for crimes against guide, signal, and service dogs and their handlers. Based on the experiences of some of our guide dog handling members, law enforcement has historically been unable to enforce the law set forth in Penal Code Section 600.5 because of the onerous requirement to prove intent. For this reason, replacing the word “intentionally” with “willfully or recklessly” will give law enforcement the ability to better enforce crimes against guide, signal, and service dogs.

Please feel free to contact my Executive Officer, Brian Skewis, at (916) 574-7825 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
Eric Holm
Board President

cc: Senate Standing Committee on Public Safety