



April 19, 2013

The Honorable Curren Price
Chair, Senate Committee on Business Professions and Economic Development
State Capitol, Room 2053
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 308 (Price) - **Support**

Dear Senator Price:

The State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind is writing in **support** of SB 308 (Price) which would extend the review of the Board and the pilot project for arbitration of disputes between guide dog users and guide dog schools over continued custody and use of guide dogs, until January 1, 2018.

In the 1940s, there were no minimum standards for guide dog school operation, making it possible for anyone to start a school. Many schools were inadequate and thus dogs were poorly trained. For example, one of the 19 schools used a snake charmer for a guide dog trainer. In addition guide dog school funds were not being used for the purposes for which they were collected, putting the visually impaired at risk. For the protection of the blind and visually impaired, standards needed to be established.

On July 8, 1947, Assembly Bill 2391 (Brown, Niehouse, Gafney, Hawkins & Price) was signed by Governor Earl Warren. Advantages of a guide dog board were 1) keeping out the fly by night schools 2) protecting the blind by ensuring minimum training standards are met for their training and the training of the guide dog 3) oversight of the disposition of donor funds to licensed schools 4) licensing and regulation of guide dog instructors.

In its sunset review report, the Board reported on several advances and efficiencies since the Board's last review. The Board also agreed with additional changes identified by the Senate Business, Professions and Education Committee. As such, we support SB 308 which would allow the Board to continue providing consumer protection, services to the Board's licensed schools and instructors, and ensure a fair and competent marketplace from which to practice until its next review in 2017.

For the reasons mentioned above, the Board is supportive of SB 308. If you have any questions or concerns regarding any of the information provided above, please feel free to contact me at (916) 574-7825. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Emmerson". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "B" and "E".

Chair, Legislative Committee, State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind
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cc: Board Members
Senator Bill Emmerson
Senator Marty Block
Senator Ellen M. Corbett
Senator Cathleen Galgiani
Senator Ed Hernandez
Senator Jerry Hill
Senator Alex Padilla
Senator Mark Wyland
Senator Leland Yee