



March 22, 2011

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

RE: SB 543 (Price)

Dear Senator Price:

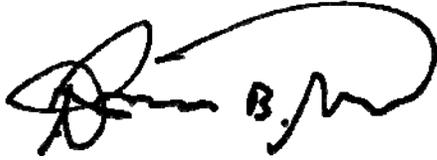
The State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind is writing in support of SB 543 (Price) which would extend the review of the Board until January 1, 2014.

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. One of the 19 schools had 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.

The Board is scheduled to sunset on January 1, 2012 and has not been provided a hearing or been provided the opportunity to be examined or evaluated for effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency. As such, we support SB 543 which would allow the Board to continue providing consumer protection and give the Legislature time to review the Board's operations during a future sunset review hearing.

For the reasons mentioned above, the Board is supportive of SB 543. 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 "Thomas B. Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

THOMAS B. SCOTT

Chair, Legislative Committee, State Board of Guide Dogs for the Blind

1625 Market Blvd. S-202

Sacramento, CA 95834

P: 916-574-7825

F: 916-574-7829

guidedogboard@dca.ca.gov

www.guidedogboard.ca.gov

cc: Board Members

Senator Emmerson

Senator Corbett

Senator Correa

Senator Hernandez

Senator McLeod

Senator Vargas

Senator Walters

Senator Wyland