



Resolution in support of the PAWS Act – H.R. 3103  
Dec. 12, 2019

The Puppies Assisting Wounding Service Members (PAWS) of 2019 introduced in June 2019, increases access to service dogs for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or for other purposes. It establishes a grant program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to organizations such as K9s for Warriors, which pairs veterans with service dogs and provides extensive training throughout the veteran's life.

**Whereas** service dogs are not pets. They are emotional support animals that are meant to help veterans suffering from debilitating symptoms such as severe social anxiety, flashbacks, nightmares and hypervigilance.

**Whereas**, according to the VA's National Suicide Report, 20 veterans commit suicide every day due to the increase in mental health disorders such as depression or substance abuse.

**Whereas** Federal regulations only allows the VA to recommend service dogs to veterans with hearing or sight loss or those who have mobility issues. PAWS would expand the definition to those suffering from PTSD or other mental health issues often preventing them from leaving home or interacting with the general public. The VA does not provide service dogs.

**Whereas** pairing veterans with service dogs costs approximately \$25,000 for the training of both the service dog and the veteran. This includes follow-up training.

**Whereas** new scientific research in 2018 has documented the positive effects for the veteran suffering from PTSD and other disorders including the reduction of suicide rates and the use of medication. In addition, it has been found that veterans having service dogs have less anger, less absenteeism from work, less anxiety, increased social ability including the ability to leave the house, and better sleep.

**Be it resolved**, that Village Independent Democrats call upon all elected representatives to immediately pass the Puppies Assisting Wounding Service Members Act of 2019.