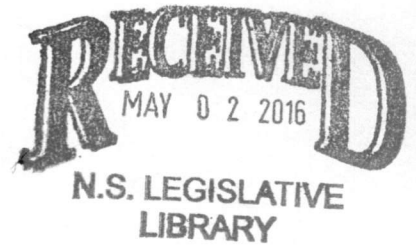


LAW AMENDMENTS COMMITTEE

Red Room, Province House

Monday, May 2, 2016

12:00 Noon



Bill #149 - Mineral Resources Act

Deferred from previous meeting

Bill #154 - Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (amended)

Deferred from previous meeting

Bill #158 - Securities Act (amended)

No representation

Bill #160 - Blueberry Associations Act (repealed)

No representation

Bill #165 - Occupational Health and Safety Act (amended)

No representation

Bill #168 - Labour Standards Code

(amended)

No representation

Bill #161 - Service Dog Act

12:00 noon

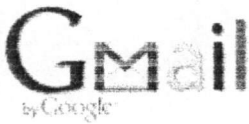
1. Lisa Partridge
Paws Fur Thought

2. Kevin Johnson

Bill #162 - Elections Act (amended)

12:00 noon

1. Mark Coffin



Lisa Partridge <lisa@pacsdogs.com>

Law Ammendments committee remarks.

1 message

Cous Cousineau <pawsfurthought1@gmail.com>
To: Lisa Partridge <lisa@pacsdogs.com>

Sun, May 1, 2016 at 10:48 AM

Lisa, can you read the following remarks please :

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee

Firstly, let me thank yourselves and Lisa Partridge for hearing and being my voice today. About 2 years ago a discussion over coffee with a Guide Dog handler made the disparity and inequity of the Blind Persons Rights Act and the Human Rights Act treatment of Guide and Service Dogs an issue. 2 disabled Nova Scotians, both with a disability, both living with the exact same Medical Assistive device and yet treated very differently in the eyes of the Law.

The hard fought gains of the visually impaired communities over the decades since guide dogs came into use is commendable and has paved the way for many other types of service dogs as we as a society begin to utilize these animals to a broader capacity. But that is not without challenges.

There are confusions under what is and is not allowed under the law, what is or isn't acceptable under the Human Rights Act. This confusion causes issues for not only the Handlers and their service dogs, but society as a whole, and for certain industry sectors the confusion is mind boggling and a misstep can result in a Human Rights Tribunal.

As a Service dog handler, a disabled Nova Scotian who relies on the very necessary aid of his service dog, I welcome the steps that the government is taking to protect both my rights as a handler, and to open the door to enhanced education and awareness amongst the general public.

In all legislation, there is a balance, and trade off. There are those with a disability who may question why they need an ID card and a visually identifiable patch. The answer is probably found in the following: When you are looking for a Policeman, a Fireman or an EHS worker, one tends to look for the uniform with those clearly identifiable markings of office. If one has a service dog in an area where one is not allowed to have animals, if you are there with a dog, you are either breaking the law or the dog is a service dog and should be identified as such. Much like parking in a Handicap parking spot requires the blue permit displayed this will provide same to the handlers. They do not have to disclose the underlying medical conditions or history, but it will add clarity to a very uncertain situation.

The fact that the legislation will also make it against the law to attempt to pass off an untrained, unqualified dog as a service dog will also protect the qualified teams in public and all Nova Scotians.

From the initial meetings with Kevin Murphy, to the tireless work of Joyce Treen and Angela Poirier, Nova Scotia is on the verge of some landmark legislation. If we can synchronize our legislation, with that of BC and get the provinces to recognize each other's certifications, just like we do with driver's licenses, we will have made some of the largest strides forward to make not only Nova Scotia, but Canada a much more inclusive world.

Thank You

Medric Cousineau, Captain Retd RCAF

Co-founder Paws Fur Thought

Kim Kenney

[REDACTED]
Martock, N.S.

[REDACTED]
May 1, 2016

Law Amendments Committee
Attention: Chair & Committee Members
C/O Hon. Dianna Whalen

Written Presentation to Committee Re:
Bill # 161 Service Dog Act

It is with great regret that I cannot personally give this presentation to you as a committee in person, but due to such short notice of when I could present I am unable to make necessary arrangements in order to get to Halifax for tomorrow.

Here that is what I wish to present to you with regards to this Bill. Bill #161.

Point 1: The process in which data was collected by the Department for this discussion paper I feel was faulted from the beginning. I for I one did not hear anything about this Discussion Paper or have the change to be part of it until after the forum had part my area (Kings) where I lived at the time.

Point 2: It was only with a lot of work on my part was I able to get my respond to the discussion paper in under the deadline set by the Department.

Point 3: Due to this my comments were unable to be heard by other consumers on Service Dogs and the concerns I had raised about the Discussion Paper and the topics someone set down for discussion.

Point 4: I had used a Service for also 20 years here in the Province of Nova Scotia and Ontario and I was the first person in Nova Scotia to use a Service Dog for other than sight impairment. I know what barriers someone faces using a Service Dog in Nova Scotia and how to deal with these barriers because I have dealt with almost every barrier addressed in this Discussion Paper.

Point 5: The actions that the Department plans to enact as a Bill I do not believe have the tools available to ensure a consumer like me will be able to register (pay for if necessary) meet assessment by someone who has the training , assessment tools for my disabilities and the dog training to ensure not only does my dog meet the safety needs of the community but also meets my needs as a disabled person .

Point 6: In this fine there is action to take place in the form of fines for persons who acted disabled when not and use dogs for assistance in the community when they should not and are not properly trained by someone who has not been determined yet by the Department. This really brings great concern to me as anyone at anytime could challenge me and my dog because we are not in possession of a provincial ID.

Point 7: I was told by Ms Whalen's Ex. Assistant that this ID would not be mandatory show I see only confusion and undue hardship on those who choose not to be part of this program offered and directed by the Department of Justice.

Point 8: Your paper stated it is there for discussion on how to protect my right which are already protected by federal law. This Bill only is an addition form of barrier to me as a disabled person living in Nova Scotia.

Poni 8: While trying to reach both the Minister to whom I sent a copy of my respond to the paper on July 27 2015 I have yet to speak to her as requested regard to my concerns.

Point 9: Staff in the Department of Justice have not only been difficult to get information and to guide me in the process of responding to this paper I could not get information on the report set to the Minister for drafting a Bill or input.

Ponit 10: In dealing with Department staff of Justice getting names beyond a first name or knowing

what position these people held on the other end of the phone was hard to extract from . I even had one staff member outright laugh at me over the phone while I was trying to get information to complete my respond to you. This not simply a lack of manners this is a simply one more block to stop me from being part of this process.

Point 11: Introduction of this Bill was not announced to me in advanced of the time it was introduced while other person were made aware and were present and spoke to media as people who speaking for the disabled community. They were not speaking on my behalf nor do I even know them.

Point12: Persons with hidden disabilities as these two persons who are pushing this Bill so hard I am sure have a greater need for ID. They both proclaimed their disabilities as PTSD does make it very hard for some people to see the service the dog is doing while a physical disability person's dog shows by immediate act what it is doing.

Point13: Training and assessment of certain dogs ie: PTSD Dogs, Seizure Dogs has been difficult for national and many provincial , and state bodies to get a handle on. However, that being the case any Bill introduced in this province needs to redrafted to include the distinctions of classes of dog usage, training by who, assessment bodies and identification bodies.

Point 14: I believe that the Department of Justice is misguided in the belief that Assistance Dogs International is some sort of recognized body that hold special license to grant certification for service dogs consumers.

Point 15: I have lived across this province and afar. For 10 years I lived in HRM and faced many barriers with my dogs over those years and I and I alone in the end deal with them, nor the Department of Justice or any other department or group and for that I am a stronger person and a included member of our society with the same rights and responsibilities as good citizen . I have that responsibility to ensure my dog is safe, healthy and able to the tasks that I require of him or her and I alone have to make that judgment call everytime I take my dog out into the community or even with I have people come into my home .That is part of the empowerment that using a Service Dog gives me everytime, and in every part of my life I share with my dog no Act can possibly ever write that in and is the greatest act my dog gives to me.

Point16: I ask you to strike down this bill and set a proper task force to redraft this Bill if it because necessary to do so. The fact that several provinces and territories do not have one indicates such.

Yours

Kim Kenney

