



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Councilman Manny Pelaez, District 8
COPIES TO: Erik Walsh, City Manager; Debbie Racca-Sittre, Interim City Clerk; Andy Segovia, City Attorney; John Peterek, Assistant to the City Manager; Emily McGinn, Assistant to City Council
SUBJECT: Codify Local Protections for Users of Service Animals Regarding Housing and Places of Public Accommodation and Conduct Awareness Outreach
DATE: October 13, 2021

Issue Proposed for Consideration

I request your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda of the earliest available meeting of the Governance Committee and subsequent approval by the full City Council:

Direction to City Staff to expand local housing and public accommodation protections in the city code for those who rely on service animals and to conduct an awareness campaign to inform housing providers and operators of places of public accommodation how to best accommodate those who rely on service animals.

Brief Background

In Military City, U.S.A., we are known for both our dedicated service to veterans and military families and our equity-informed strategies that help ensure inclusivity in public-policy making. As a city with a substantial community of active-duty military and veteran families and with a sizeable segment that experiences one or more disabilities, San Antonio has a considerable number of residents who rely on service animals.

According to the 2017 American Community Survey, which began collecting data in 2005 in coordination with the U.S. Census Bureau, San Antonio at the time featured an estimated 232,627 individuals who reported having one or more types of disability or 15.6% of the population.¹ Furthermore, studies have shown that approximately 8% of the general population in the U.S. suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, and the prevalence is twice as high in active-duty service members and military veterans.²

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

² Judkins JL, Moore BA, Collette TL, Hale WJ, Peterson AL, Morissette SB. Incidence Rates of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Over a 17-Year Period in Active Duty Military Service Members. J Trauma Stress. 2020 Dec;33(6):994-1006. doi: 10.1002/jts.22558. Epub 2020 Jun 29. PMID: 32598575.

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Although the City of San Antonio has been a leader in supporting the connection of local dogs with training to become service animals that serve veterans through its partnership with K9s for Warriors, we must go a step further and ensure a greater array of local protections in places of public accommodation and housing for all who rely on service animals.

Service animals receive special training and provide vital support by helping people with an array of physical and mental disabilities navigate major life tasks, yet our code of ordinances features less than a dozen limited and brief mentions of public and housing accommodation protections for those who require these aids.

I propose that we accordingly update our codes and guidelines which apply to local businesses, places of public accommodation, and housing providers. Those updates should focus on improving access to individuals of all abilities who rely on service animals. Furthermore, I propose we create and implement outreach and public information campaigns to ensure that housing providers and places of public accommodation are best equipped to serve those who rely on service animals and that they understand their roles and responsibilities.

For the above stated reasons, I request your support.

Submitted for Council consideration by:

Councilman Manny Pelaez, District 8

Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures (4 only)

District

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