

Believet Position Statement on H.R. 3103 12/26/19

PAWS ACT – Puppies Assisting Wounded Service Members (H.R. 3103)

Believet supports H.R 3103 because highly trained service dogs for veterans with PTS are a low cost, low risk, high reward, and proven treatment option for those dealing with the symptoms of PTS. Those who risk their lives for the USA deserve the absolute best care upon their return to civilian life. There is ample proof that the service dogs work for trauma survivors, including veterans with PTS by positively effecting depression, anxiety, social outcomes, sleep and quality of life. Service dogs save veteran lives.

We cannot wait any longer for the fundamentally flawed VA research program. The VA cannot be trusted to effectively manage and/or supervise their own efficacy research study; You will never meet a researcher who says we have enough research but meanwhile, since 2009 when Congress first mandated the PTS service dog pilot program, 80,300 American veterans have committed suicide (according to the VAs own numbers). For example, the V.A. insisted on developing their own veterinary standards for their study, which was duplicative and wasteful. The VA could have adopted DODs long-standing and successful veterinary standards rather than, unsuccessfully, re-inventing the wheel. Loyalty to the VA machine runs strong because there is revenue and job security in research as well as substantial K Street influence.

There are no negative side effects to service dogs for veterans with PTS and there is ample evidence that service dogs are therapeutic for treating the symptoms of PTS. H.R. 3103 is an opportunity to do a great deal of good, at very low risk. For these reasons, Believet supports H.R. 3103.