

Subject: Support for Sb535 – Housing Discrimination – Service Dogs and Guide Dogs

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To: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

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My name is Sherry Shirek, please support SB535 so that other blind people do not have to experience the same trouble that I had.

In 2011, my guide dog (Tennessee) could no longer work. I had worked with him for 9.5 years; he was my constant companion. The apartment where we lived had a no pets policy. They informed me that I had to get rid of my dog or move. I had a very hard time finding someone to adopt my dog. I checked with friends, advertised in the community but could not find anyone who would be home to take care of Tennessee. The veterinary doctor took him for a little while and found a retired person to take care of him. The dog was not happy with the new owner, and Tennessee eventually died. It still breaks my heart when I think about it.

I got a new dog Millie and she worked with me, but she died in April 2022. I currently live in an apartment where there is a onetime pet fee of \$300.00. If I was to get another dog, and had to retire her, I would have to pay \$25.00 per month along with the \$300.00. This fee on top of the \$1,825.00 rent per month that I currently pay is beyond my means, so I have decided not to get another dog which is a hardship. I have made this decision because I do not want to experience the trauma of having to look for a new home and losing the dog. If this bill passes, I may get another guide dog. Please give a favorable vote for SB535.