



Paralyzed Veterans of America

801 18th Street NW
Washington DC 20006-3517
(O) 202.872.1300
(TTY) 202.416.7622
(F) 202.785.4452
www.pva.org

Chartered by the Congress of the United States

June 13, 2017

Honorable Ron DeSantis
1524 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative DeSantis:

On behalf of Paralyzed Veterans of America (Paralyzed Veterans), I offer our support for H.R. 2327, the "Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers (PAWS) Act of 2017." This legislation would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a pilot program to assist veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by providing grants to organizations that provide referred veterans with service dogs.

Service animals provide crucial assistance to many veterans living with catastrophic disabilities. The benefits of using a service animal are multi-faceted. Service animals promote independence and help to break down societal barriers. Many members of Paralyzed Veterans have personally experienced these benefits.

Through the PAWS Act, VA will provide grants to service animal organizations to assist veterans referred by VA who have PTSD. This pilot program will provide service dogs to veterans with PTSD who have completed evidence-based treatment for PTSD but who continue to have a PTSD diagnosis. We support efforts to increase access to service animals for veterans with disabilities. It is our hope that this program will be funded, however, without offsetting resources for VA's Office of Human Resources and Administration, which could derail VA's efforts to hire and retain qualified personnel.

We appreciate your interest in serving veterans with PTSD. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Carl Blake, PVA Associate Executive Director of Government Relations, at (202) 416-7708 or by email at carlb@pva.org.

Respectfully,

Sherman Gillums, Jr.
Executive Director