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## DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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HB 407 Original

2024 Regular Session

Stagni

**Abstract:** Prohibits healthcare providers from producing documentation relating to an individual's need for a support animal unless they satisfy certain requirements. Prohibits misrepresentations of service dogs and requires written notices for individuals and businesses who sell support animals. Limits liability for owners and lessors for damages caused by a service dog or support animal.

Proposed law provides a short title for proposed law, to be known as the "La. Support and Service Animal Integrity Act."

Proposed law provides the purposes and intent of proposed law.

Proposed law defines "disability" in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq., and its related amendments. The term includes handicap as defined by 42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq., as amended, and 24 CFR 100.201.

Proposed law defines "healthcare provider" in accordance with R.S. 40:1231.1(A)(10).

Proposed law defines "healthcare services" in accordance with R.S. 22:1020.1(D)(8).

Proposed law defines "support animal" as an animal, other than a service dog as defined in present law (R.S. 46:1952(3)), that does work, performs tasks, provides assistance, or therapeutic emotional support for individuals with disabilities.

Proposed law defines "therapeutic relationship" as the provision of healthcare services by a healthcare provider in good faith and with actual knowledge of an individual's disability and that individual's disability-related need for a support animal. The term shall not include services provided by an individual or entity that issues a certificate, license, letter or similar document that purports to confirm, without conducting a meaningful assessment of a person's disability or a person's disability-related need for a support animal, that a person: (a) has a disability; or (b) has a disability-related need for a support animal.

Proposed law prohibits healthcare providers from producing documentation relating to an individual's need for a support animal unless they satisfy the following requirements:

- (1) Possesses an active and valid La. license to perform healthcare services.

- (2) Is qualified and licensed to evaluate and diagnose disabilities and has performed a disability assessment of an individual.
- (3) Includes all the following in the documentation relating to an individual's need for a support animal:
  - (a) The effective date of the documentation.
  - (b) The license number of the healthcare provider.
  - (c) The type of professional license held by the healthcare provider.
- (4) Establishes a therapeutic relationship with an individual no less than sixty days prior to producing the documentation regarding the individual's need for a support animal.
- (5) Has engaged with an individual in person or remotely in at least three sessions before issuing documentation regarding the individual's need for a support animal.
- (6) Performs a clinical evaluation of an individual no less than sixty days before producing documentation regarding individual's need for a support animal.

Proposed law prohibits healthcare providers from representing or attempting to represent that an individual has a disability that requires the use of a support animal when the individual is not disabled or does not need a support animal for that individual's disability.

Proposed law prohibits an individual from representing or attempting to represent to third parties that said individual has a disability that requires the use of a support animal when the individual is not disabled or does not need a support animal for that individual's disability.

Proposed law prohibits an individual from representing that an animal is a service dog or service dog-in-training to any person or entity operating a public accommodation or residential dwelling.

Proposed law provides certain written notice requirements for an individual or business engaged in the sale of support animals.

Proposed law provides certain written notice requirements for an individual or business engaged in the sale of certificates, letters, identifications, tags, vests, leashes, or harnesses for support animals.

Proposed law provides a penalty of \$500 for the first offense of an individual who violates the provisions of proposed law. Further provides a penalty of \$1,000 for the second offense and a penalty of \$2,500 for the third or any subsequent offense.

Proposed law provides immunity for owners and lessors of residential dwellings, and their agents, employees or representatives, for damages caused by a service dog or support animal.

(Adds R.S. 46:1971-1979)