

SENATE No. 1254

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Michael F. Rush

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying resolve:

Resolve creating a commission to study the intentional misrepresentation of a service animal.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Michael F. Rush

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Norfolk and Suffolk

SENATE No. 1254

By Mr. Rush, a petition (accompanied by resolve, Senate, No. 1254) of Michael F. Rush that provisions be made for an investigation and study by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to the intentional misrepresentation of a service animal. The Judiciary.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

Resolve creating a commission to study the intentional misrepresentation of a service animal.

1 **Resolved**, (a) There shall be a special legislative commission established pursuant to
2 section 2A of chapter 4 of the General Laws to study and report on the use of service animals in
3 the commonwealth. The commission shall consist of 15 members: 2 of whom shall be the house
4 and senate chairs of the joint committee on the judiciary or their designees, who shall serve as
5 co-chairs; 1 of whom shall be appointed by the speaker of the house; 1 of whom shall be
6 appointed by the senate president; 1 of whom shall be appointed by the house minority leader; 1
7 of whom shall be appointed by the senate minority leader; 1 of whom shall be the attorney
8 general or their designee; 1 of whom shall be the director of the Massachusetts office on
9 disability or their designee; 1 of whom shall be the chair of the Massachusetts Commission
10 Against Discrimination or their designee; 1 of whom shall be the chair of the municipal police
11 training committee established pursuant to section 116 of chapter 6 of the General Laws or their
12 designee; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of the mental health legal advisors
13 committee established pursuant to section 34E of chapter 221 of the General Laws or their
14 designee; 1 of whom shall be the president of the Massachusetts Restaurant Association or their

15 designee; and 3 members who shall be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a
16 representative of a professional organization specializing in the advocacy, education or training
17 of service animals, 1 of whom shall be a representative of a professional organization
18 specializing in the advocacy, education, and/or training of other animals, including emotional
19 support, companion, or comfort animals, and 1 of whom shall be a member of an association
20 advocating for the interests of retailers in the commonwealth.

21 (b) The study shall include, but not be limited to: (i) reviewing current federal, state and
22 local laws and procedures governing the use of service animals in the commonwealth; (ii)
23 examining the use and benefit of service animals by individuals with disabilities in the
24 commonwealth; (iii) investigating the presence, prevalence and impact of fraud,
25 misrepresentation and other misuse of service animals in the commonwealth; (iv) researching
26 laws and practices in other jurisdictions with the objective to deter the misuse of service animals;
27 and (v) identifying training and educational opportunities aimed at increasing understanding of
28 laws governing the use of service animals among public officials, law enforcement, business
29 owners and members of the public in the commonwealth. The commission shall report on its
30 findings, including, but not limited to: (i) recommending changes to laws governing the use of
31 service animals in the commonwealth, if any, including the definition of “service animal” and
32 whether to introduce legislation prohibiting and civilly penalizing service animal fraud; and (ii)
33 determining the feasibility of certifying, registering or licensing service animals in the
34 commonwealth.

35 (c) The commission shall file its report not later than April 1, 2026 with the clerks of the
36 house of representatives and the senate, who shall forward a copy of the report to the chairs of
37 the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on the judiciary.