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March 8, 2018

Honorable Members of the Pennsylvania House Urban Affairs Committee:

On behalf of the Pennsylvania and Delaware Valley Chapter of the Community Associations Institute (CAI), I write to convey our support for House Bill No. 2049 to be known as the Service Animal Integrity Act. This Act provides a landlord who has received a request from a person to make exceptions to the landlord's policy prohibiting animals or otherwise placing restrictions on animals because the person requires the use of an assistance animal or service animal, the right to request documentation of the disability.

CAI proposes to amend the Act to allow associations governing common interest ownership communities, such as planned communities, cooperatives and condominiums, the right to make a similar request for documentation. Planned communities, cooperatives and condominiums are established through recorded declarations of covenants and restrictions. These documents often contain restrictions prohibiting individual unit owners from maintaining pets in their units or restricting the number, size or type of animals which may be housed within units owned by individuals. The restrictions apply as well to common elements administered by the association. Association boards are frequently presented with requests from individual unit owners to permit animals in units which would otherwise be prohibited based upon an alleged disability with minimal documentation. Association boards are placed in a difficult position of trying to determine which individuals are truly entitled to a reasonable accommodation based upon their disability as opposed to those individuals who are attempting to allege a disability in order to obtain or maintain an animal in their unit which is otherwise prohibited. The proposed amendment to House Bill No. 2049 would extend to associations throughout Pennsylvania the right to request additional documentation to support the request for a reasonable accommodation.

On behalf of CAI and the thousands of community associations throughout the Commonwealth, I respectfully request your support in reporting this legislation, as amended by CAI, out of the House Urban Affairs Committee.

Very kind regards,

Tony Campisi  
Executive Director