



49651 Shenandoah Circle  
Canton, MI 48187

September 13, 2021

Senator Aric Nesbitt  
Chair, Regulatory Reform Committee  
Michigan Senate

*Via email, Mike Sitkauskas, Committee Clerk, ofcsc@senate.michigan.gov*

**Re: Support HB 4256, Senate Regulatory Reform Committee Meeting, September 14, 2021**

Dear Senator Nesbitt, Committee Members, Representative Brann and other sponsors:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Attorneys for Animals, Inc. (AFA) is a Michigan non-profit and 501(c)(3) organization of legal professionals and animal advocates. AFA's Board of Directors voted to support HB 4256, which revises MCL §750.502c, the public accommodation statute, a part of the criminal code.

This bill updates and modernizes the statute requiring public accommodations to permit the use of service animals. It expands the use of service animals by "animal trainers" and "animal raisers" in addition to "person(s) with a disability" who are currently covered. It also sets accreditation standards for these two new categories.

The bill is crafted to comply with the federal Americans with Disability Act. We have noted with concern efforts in the previous legislative session to regulate Emotional Support Animals ("ESA") in housing, using punitive measures, which may have violated the federal Fair Housing Law (as noted in the Governor's veto of these bills)<sup>i</sup> and which arguably were introduced in response to nationwide outcry about ESAs but which harmed the animals and the people who had a legitimate need for these animals. In comparison, HB 4256 is carefully drafted, does not confuse service animals with Emotional Support Animals and does not potentially run afoul of federal law. We urge the committee to report HB 4256.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beatrice M. Friedlander".

Beatrice M. Friedlander, JD  
President

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<sup>i</sup> Veto message, HBs 4910, 4911, [http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(maz0t1yqox2qmalbokwq24nf\)\)/documents/2019-2020/Journal/House/pdf/2020-HJ-12-31-104.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(maz0t1yqox2qmalbokwq24nf))/documents/2019-2020/Journal/House/pdf/2020-HJ-12-31-104.pdf) at page 2