



**LEGISLATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS UNIT**

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September 9, 2019

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
Capitol Building, 1st Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 169 (Lackey) – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Newsom:

Disability Rights California (DRC), a non-profit advocacy organization that advances and protects the rights of Californians with disabilities, **supports AB 169 and requests your signature.**

We appreciate the author's recognition that the death of or injury to a guide, signal, or service dog is a significant loss to the person who relies on the dog for assistance. This is true regardless of whether death or injury occurs while the dog is "working."

Notwithstanding the tremendous emotional and personal loss experienced by a person whose dog is killed or injured, there is also the loss of a person's lifeline to work and community. AB 169 includes medical expenses and lost wages of the person with a disability among the list of compensable costs. The law should recognize the severity of this loss to the dog's owner, which can be just as devastating and incapacitating as it would be if the dog had been discharging its duties at the time.

Individuals who use guide, signal or service dogs are able to establish their own independence with those animals as support. These dogs also provide affection, companionship, and confidence. Service dogs serve a major purpose to people with disabilities.

Applying the bill's provisions to training and related costs is also a step in the right direction of recognizing that dogs trained to provide assistance reflect an investment in the independence of people who rely on their canine support.

For these reasons, we support this bill. Please contact me if you have any questions about our position on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent "E" and "H".

Eric Harris
Legislative Advocate 2
Disability Rights California

cc: Honorable Tom Lackey, California State Assembly
Mark Isidro, Legislative Director, Office of Assembly Member Lackey
Anthony Williams, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of Legislative
Affairs
Tammy Trinh, Legislative Research Assistant, Office of Legislative
Affairs