

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELawe KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 5, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 1025 – RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION.**

Hearing: February 6, 2025, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure, provides comments, and defers to mass transit officials.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Act is to allow service animals and non-service pet animals on mass transit systems in the State.

While DHS supports efforts to improve accessibility and mobility for Hawaii residents, we would like to express concerns regarding potential impacts on individuals with disabilities who rely on service animals.

Service animals play a critical role in promoting independence for individuals with disabilities. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are specially trained to perform tasks directly related to their handler's disability. They undergo extensive training to ensure appropriate behavior in public spaces, including on public transportation. The inclusion of non-service pet animals, particularly during off-peak hours without strict regulations, may inadvertently create barriers for individuals with disabilities who rely on service animals for their daily activities.

We respectfully highlight the following concerns:

1. **Safety and Comfort of Individuals with Disabilities:** Untrained pet animals, even when leashed or contained, may become disruptive or aggressive, potentially causing distress or harm to individuals with service animals. Encounters with untrained animals could interfere with a service animal's ability to perform its duties effectively.
2. **Potential for Overcrowding and Accessibility Challenges:** Allowing non-service pet animals, particularly larger dogs, could create space constraints on mass transit vehicles, limiting available seating and accessibility for individuals with disabilities, including wheelchair users and those with mobility impairments.
3. **Enforcement and Compliance:** While the bill outlines behavior expectations for non-service pet animals, enforcement remains a concern. Transit personnel would require clear guidelines and sufficient training to distinguish between service animals and pet animals, as well as manage incidents where non-service pet animals exhibit disruptive behavior.

We appreciate the bill's recognition of the importance of public transportation access for all residents. However, we recommend additional safeguards to ensure that the rights and needs of individuals with disabilities remain a priority. Potential amendments could include:

- Requiring stricter containment policies for non-service pet animals beyond peak hours (e.g., all non-service pet animals must always remain in carriers).
- Designating specific areas on transit vehicles where non-service pet animals are permitted to minimize conflicts with service animal users.
- Providing training for transit personnel on ADA requirements and best practices for managing interactions between service animals and non-service pet animals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



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WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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LATE

TO: Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair
Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
Marc Takamori, Director of Transportation

DATE: February 6, 2025

SUBJECT: **OPPOSITION OF SB1025, RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **OPPOSITION** of this measure. The Act allows service and non-service pet animals on mass transit vehicles under certain conditions.

While we understand of the intent of the proposed bill, we'd like to offer the following comments:

1. Each county's transit system operates under unique conditions, from varying population densities and ridership patterns to diverse infrastructure and community needs. A statewide mandate ignores these critical local nuances, hindering our ability to craft effective, tailored policies.
2. Enforcing animal-related policies and managing animal behavior places an additional burden on our drivers, who already manage numerous responsibilities. This added oversight could detract from their primary focus on safe and efficient operation.
3. Passenger safety is our paramount concern. Introducing large, untrained dogs on leashes poses a significant risk, particularly to children and elderly riders using mobility devices. The potential for incidents, coupled with the fear and intimidation such animals can cause, could deter ridership and compromise passenger well-being.
4. Incidents involving animals, or the need for cleaning, could require buses to be taken out of service. Given the infrequent nature of Maui Bus routes (ranging from hourly to every 90 minutes), such disruptions would severely impact riders and their ability to reach their destinations.

For these reasons, we **OPPOSE** SB1025, we respectfully request the committee consider amendments that address our concerns regarding the practical challenges of implementation, including enforcement burdens on drivers, potential service disruptions, the allocation of necessary

resources and above all, passenger safety. The introduction of large, untrained dogs on leashes presents a clear safety risk to vulnerable riders and could negatively impact overall ridership.

Mahalo for your consideration.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE 'ŌHUA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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LATE

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



J. ROGER MORTON
DIRECTOR
PO'O

JON Y. NOUCHI
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

TESTIMONY OF J. ROGER MORTON
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND
CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Thursday, February 6, 2025, 3:00 PM
Conference RM 224 and Via Videoconference

TO: Sen. Chris Lee, Chair, Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

RE: OPPOSITION TO SENATE BILL 1025, RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION, WITH COMMENTS

The Department of Transportation Services (DTS), City and County of Honolulu (City), opposes Senate Bill 1025, relating to transportation and provides the following comments.

DTS supports in concept the ability for passengers to travel with their companion animals; however, DTS cannot support the bill as drafted since it raises safety and implementation concerns. DTS notes that allowing non-service pet animals onto any mass transit vehicle within a specified two-hour time period, during morning and afternoon peak travel hours, may create an unsafe condition for the pet animals and passengers, with both being in an uncomfortably close proximity to each other. And with transit personnel retaining the authority to restrict pet animal access during overcrowding or other safety concerns, pet animal owners may be required to wait for the next available bus during peak hours, creating an uncertain situation for pet owners.

Additionally, while larger dogs shall be allowed onto transit vehicles during off-peak hours; provided that, they are securely leashed and do not occupy seats or impede passenger movement, "larger" dogs are not defined in the statutes so enforcement of the law would be at the subjective call of the transit personnel, again raising uncertainty in the implementation.

Safety concerns are further raised when considering the application of the law on the City's rail system. While buses have operators that can promptly respond to incidents involving non-service pet animals and passengers, a Skyline train may not have transit personnel on board to quickly intercede and an incident may continue for the duration of the ride until the train reaches the next station.

DTS recommends that the regulation and implementation of allowing non-service pets animals on transit vehicles should be left to the respective counties and their transit providers who are optimally situated to craft ordinances and rules specific to their individual county needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in opposition with comments.

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:20:57 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stan Young	Testifying for Hawaii State Committee of Blind Vendors	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Guide dogs are a necessary mode of transportation for some who are blind. Guide dogs are extremely well trained and are extremely controlled in command, controlled, in nature, and behavior, and therefore, they should be allowed on public transportation. For some blind people to travel on public transportation, it is a necessary tool and works to guide them safely and efficiently. It is also necessary on other modes of public transportation like on Uber and Lyft. To deny the use of guide dogs for the blind on public transportation is discriminatory.



Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Feb. 4, 2025

To: Chair Sen. Chris Lee
Vice Chair Sen. Lorraine Inouye
and Members of the Committee on Transportation
and Culture and the Arts

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Director of Community Engagement
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in strong support of SB 1025: Relating to Transportation
Thursday, Feb. 6, 2025, 3 p.m., Room 224 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our strong support for Senate Bill 1025, which allows pet animals on mass transit vehicles under certain conditions.

Hawaiian Humane is in strong support of this measure, which is similar to policies that have been successfully adopted in mainland jurisdictions.

The Hawaiian Humane Society recently conducted extensive research on the Waianae Coast regarding the challenges faced by pet owners. The study included two focus groups with a total of 40 participants and a survey of 173 residents, all of them pet owners.

In the focus groups, participants cited transportation issues, and in particular pets not being allowed on public transportation, as a barrier to caring for their animals. In the survey, 23 percent of participants said their primary means of transportation was public transit.

The health benefits of the human-animal bond are well established by research and include lower blood pressure, improved cardiac function, reduced feelings of social isolation and lower rates of obesity. This measure strikes a balance between allowing pet owners access to vital transportation services and protecting the safety and comfort of all passengers.

We urge the committee to pass SB 1025 and support the human-animal bond, which delivers profound benefits to pet owners across our islands. Mahalo for your time.



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

2/3/25

Dear Chairs and Committee Members

The Environmental Caucus fully supports SB 1025 relating to allowing pets on public transportation so that pet owners can care responsibly for their pets.

As the Humane Society has testified there are many people who live in country areas who don't have a car but do have pets they need to take to veterinarians or to an animal friendly park.

Understandably, steps must be taken to protect riders who have animal allergies, and animals beings transported must be suitably restrained or contained to protect riders and other pets.

However, hardworking people and families with lower incomes are already penalized enough in our state because, they cannot live in housing closer to where they work, or they cannot afford a car. Sometimes people have to live further outside urban areas because they cannot find accommodations that will allow pets in urban areas.

This bill would be a big step towards helping people to fulfill their obligations to their beloved pets.

Sincerely

Martha E Randolph
Environmental Caucus of the DPH
SCC Representative.

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:25:02 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dara Fukuhara	Testifying for Hawaii Fi-Do Service Dogs	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Opposition to SB 1025

Hearing: February 6, 2025

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dara Fukuhara, and I am the board president of Hawaii Fi-Do Service Dogs. As an individual with a disability who is currently training a puppy to become my service dog, I strongly oppose SB 1025. This bill poses a significant threat to individuals who rely on service dogs to navigate daily life safely. I urge the Committee to defer SB 1025 to protect the rights and safety of service dog users.

SB 1025’s Risks to Service Dog Users

SB 1025 would allow pets to travel on mass transit, with small pets permitted at all times if confined to a carrier and large, non-service dogs allowed during off-peak hours on a leash. This proposal jeopardizes the safety and independence of service dog users by introducing unpredictable animals into an already complex and high-risk environment.

Service dogs are highly trained working animals with a crucial job: keeping their handlers safe from hazards such as moving vehicles and uneven terrain. Their focus must remain solely on their handler. The presence of pets—especially large, uncrated dogs—creates dangerous distractions that could lead to accidents or even life-threatening situations.

Essential Amendments if SB 1025 Advances

If the Committee moves forward with this bill, the following amendments are critical to mitigate harm:

- Restrict travel to small pets in enclosed carriers during off-peak hours only.
- Prohibit large dogs from traveling on mass transit at all times.
- Establish concise size and design requirements for pet carriers.

Large Dogs Must Be Prohibited on Mass Transit

The presence of large, uncrated dogs on public transportation is a direct threat to service dogs and their handlers. The bill currently allows large dogs to travel during off-peak hours, but this provision must be removed because:

1. Unpredictability and Lack of Control – A large dog, even if leashed, may lunge, bark, or react aggressively toward a service dog. Many incidents have occurred where pet dogs attacked service dogs, forcing their premature retirement and leaving their owners without essential mobility assistance.
2. Legal and Financial Liabilities – Transit authorities could face lawsuits if pet dogs attack service animals or passengers. A bus driver may not be able to anticipate an aggressive dog's behavior, leading to claims of negligence.
3. Obstruction and Cleanliness Issues – Large dogs take up substantial space, creating congestion in transit vehicles. They may block aisles, jump on passengers, or create hygiene concerns. Unlike pets in carriers, uncrated dogs can have accidents that pose sanitation risks.

The Need for Concise Pet Carrier Regulations

If pets are allowed on mass transit, specific requirements for pet carriers must be included to prevent disputes and ensure safety. Other transit systems, including Amtrak, enforce clear requirements:

- Carriers must be leak-proof, well-ventilated, and enclosed to prevent noise and distractions.
- Only one pet per carrier should be permitted.
- A strict weight and size limit (such as Amtrak's 20-pound limit) should be enforced to prevent oversized carriers from encroaching on passenger space.

National Transit Policies Demonstrate Best Practices

Other major transit systems do not permit large, uncrated dogs:

- New York City Subway & Chicago Transit Authority – Only small dogs in carriers are allowed.
- Amtrak – Only dogs and cats up to 20 pounds in carriers are allowed.
- Boston MBTA – Large dogs are allowed only during off-peak hours, but small pets in carriers are required during peak hours.

Hawaii should follow best practices that prioritize public safety and accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Conclusion

Permitting uncrated pets, especially large dogs, on mass transit creates unacceptable risks for individuals who depend on service dogs. This bill, as written, threatens public safety, violates accessibility principles, and imposes new burdens on transit systems.

I strongly urge the Committee to defer SB 1025. If the bill moves forward, I implore you to adopt my proposed amendments to protect individuals who rely on service dogs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dara Fukuhara
Board President, Hawaii Fi-Do Service Dogs

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:53:05 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in support SB1025.. As an owner of a service animal, Bambi, can walk onto our bus and rail system. If the driver has to ask what kind of dog he is, you need to know the right term to use, otherwise dogs like other animals should be in a carrier because they could be startled by unexpected events or people. Most bus drivers have been advised to ask and some people even ask what is the one thing your dog can do for you, under the ADA rules. But they should expect some strange answers if they do. You should have a disability or have been labeled disabled to have a service dog, even if it is not visible. Bambi is trained not to bark and attack people or other dogs and is potty trained. But like a child needs to sit on my lap, not on the chair, to look out the window or sometimes seems to check if the driver knows where he is going!

It's the owner that needs to be trained, not the dogs! Homeless individuals take advantage and sometimes take 3 dogs onto the bus, where they would bark or attack other service dogs. Homeless dogs like their owners do not understand where is their territory to protect and attack individuals if you come close to them or their owner. One man put a Service Dog harness on his dog that tried to attack Bambi in Jack-in Box twice. The owner panicked and dropped the leash and was more frightened then the dog when I yelled out "NO" both times. A man with a pit bull mix, who stared at Bambi, refused to leash his dog, until he realized that we'd be boarding the same bus. He dropped the leash while fumbling for busfare and allowed his dog to walk down the bus aisle on his own. I know I need to be prepared to react quickly, if the dog decided to attack Bambi. Dogs need to learn the difference of being on a leash or off. Bambi knows even on his retractable leash, when he can roam to its length or when he is being punished or needs to stay close to me. But owners who are not consistent in their actions, so the dog does not understand different actions!

If undisciplined children are allowed on transits, then service dogs or dogs/animals in carriers should be allowed! Mahalo for letting me share my story of my service dog, Bambi and please support SB1025!.

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 2:54:02 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Rabb	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB1025 by Senator Chris Lee. The bill is an a well-reasoned approach to allow well-behaved pet animals to accompany their owners who use public transportation.

Please support this.

Mahalo,

Renee Rabb

Keaau, HI 96749

Big Island

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 3:56:17 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nandita Sharma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of this Bill. Allowing pet animals on mass transit vehicles under certain conditions has been shown to increase the accessibility of public transport, especially for people who are reliant on it for their ability to move around the island. It also ensures that animals are better-taken care of, as people can get them to a healthcare provider.

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:01:29 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Many pet owners are not auto owners or cannot drive for other reasons such as medical disability. Consequently, if they are needing to take their animals somewhere, it makes it costly and difficult to find transportation through friends/family or taxi, or rideshare services. How many of them restrict animals. Please consider passing this bill

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:08:46 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Serena Stefanic-Phillip	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Bill SB1025

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:44:27 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JOANNE PARKER	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this very important bill.

An animal may be a person's only friend or is this peirson or person's family.

I have the luxury of my own transportation, this person may not. I am able to take my friend across town to the park or to the vet's office for it's yearly check up. This person can't take his or her best friend anywhere.

If we have rules and regulations in place, please make it possible for this person to take the best of care of the most precious friend.

Please support this bill

Mahalo

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 7:46:56 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carole R. Richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

strong support for those with limited transportation options

Hawai'i Kai

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 8:11:22 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jan Allen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1025! Mahalo, Jan Allen

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:12:02 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie McLaughlin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this important bill that will help Hawaii's animals and their human guardians.

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 12:36:59 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Senator Lee, Vice Chair Senator Inouye and Members of the Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts.

Please vote for SB 1025 to support mass transit riders by allowing them to bring their pet animals on to mass transit vehicles under certain conditions.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 12:43:45 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taurie Kinoshita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB1025.

This law has been adopted my other states, and it is time for Hawai'i to pass it too.

No one should be penalized for having a pet.

Taking a dog or pet onto a bus harms no one!!!!

It is completely unfair to animal-lovers and pet owners.

Please pass this important bill!

Sincerely,

Taurie Kinoshita

voter and lifelong resident

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:46:02 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
eva marie kelnhofer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

i support this bill it will help pet owners access to public transportation with their pets. If this is the only means they have for transportation to help get their pets the medical help when needed.

Thank you

EvaMarie Kelnhofer

Aiea

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 9:43:59 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Many people consider their pets as members of the family. In fact, they treat them better than they do the human members of the family.

This is an excellent bill. It makes legal what is in effect on public transportation in Honolulu, where people turn the other eye when passengers embark with their pets.

I was owned by pet birds, who did travel to the vet in enclosed carriers. Dog and cat owners, as well as those of other pets, need to get to the vet too. Often, they rely on public transit and it is difficult for them to obtain medical care for the nonhuman family members. Please move this bill forward.

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 10:28:22 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

For those of us lucky enough to own a car, taking a pet to the vet is relatively easy. However, for the many people who don't drive or own a car, getting veterinary care often requires taking the pet on public transport. This bill would enable them to do so.

Jane E Arnold

1763 Iwi Way, Apt D

Honolulu HI. 96816

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:53:25 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB1025. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I reside at Sunset Beach, Oahu.

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 2:01:31 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Saul	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Am writing in support of SB1025 Relating to Transportation.

I have been a bus rider for many years, a pet owner even longer, and believe that compatibility can co-exist by allowing pet animals on mass transit vehicles. Under reasonable conditions and with responsible owners, well behaved pets will act more predictably and reliably than some human riders I have observed in the past.

Thank you.

Alice Saul
Hawaii Kai, Honolulu

PETER L. FRITZ
Attorney at Law
EMAIL: PLFLEGIS@FRITZHQ.COM

Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and The Arts
Honorable Chris Lee, Chair
Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

RE: **Testimony in Opposition to SB 1025**

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Peter Fritz. I am an individual with a disability, an attorney and an advocate for individuals with disabilities that has filed ADA complaints against the State. I am a former chair of the Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) and the Rehabilitation Advisory Council. I am testifying **in opposition to SB 1025**. Permitting pets on mass transit poses a threat to individuals that rely on their guide dog to live a normal life. I ask that the Committee defer this bill to protect people that use guide dogs. If the Committee decides to advance this bill, I respectfully request that Committee adopt my suggested alternative language.

SB 1025 would allow people to travel with their pets on mass transit. Small pets would be permitted to travel during all hours if they were confined to a pet carrier from which they could not escape. Non service animal large dogs would be permitted to travel during off-peak hours if the large dog was on a leash.

If the Committee advances this bill, I respectfully suggest that the Committee amend this bill to:

- Restrict travel to small pets in carriers to off-peak hours
- Prohibit large dogs
- Specify the size of the pet carrier

A guide dog is a working dog. A guide dog is trained to focus its attention on its owner and protect the owner from hazards such as stepping in front of a car or tripping over a curb. A dog or cat in a carrier or a large dog could bark or otherwise distract the guide dog, which could imperil the guide dog owner. This is less likely to occur during off-peak hours when a bus or train is less crowded. Travel with hats should not be allowed during off-peak hours.

Large Dogs Should be Prohibited at All Times

Large dogs should be prohibited from travelling on mass transit at all times. The provisions in this bill, beginning on page 2, lines 17-19, should be stricken. The word “properly leashed or contained”, on page 3 line 2 should be deleted. Uncrated large dogs pose a threat to guide dogs.

A Person Might Not Be Able to Control a Large Dog

A large dog that leaps forward unexpectedly could cause injuries to another person because the owner did not expect that the dog was going to leap at a service animal. Newspaper articles often include information about a dog owner being unable to control their dog. An individual could sue the transit system claiming that the driver failed to notice the dog's conduct and should have refused entry to the large dog.

I am familiar with the case of a large dog on a leash that attacked a service dog and mauling the guide dog so badly that the service dog could not be retrained and had to be retired. The owner was forced to apply for another service dog, wait for a service dog to become available and travel and stay at the guide dog school for several weeks to train with that the new guide dog. All animals traveling on mass transit should be in a carrier.

Friendly dogs jump up on people, sniff people, or greet other dogs which may obstruct block other passengers from getting on the bus. A small dog is confined to the carrier and cannot jump on people.

Who is Going to Clean Up After a Large Uncrated Dog?

Accidents happen. Dogs throw up. Who is going to clean up after a large dog? Will buses be equipped with disinfectant spray, towels and other supplies needed to clean up after a mess? Will buses be equipped with a shovel to clean up after a Great Dane? Will people that travel with a pet be required to carry cleaning supplies? When pets are confined to a leak proof carrier, cleanup is not an issue.

Potential Increased Workers Compensation Liability

Allowing uncrated pets on public transportation could expose the transit system to increased Workers Compensation claims. If a driver is injured trying to separate two large dogs or breakup an altercation between a passenger, one of whom is a passenger that had their coffee spilled when it was knocked over by the tail of a large dog belonging to another passenger.

This Bill Should Specify the Maximum Size of a Pet Carrier

To avoid arguments between passengers that place a pet carrier on their lap with an adjacent passenger claiming that the carrier is intruding into their lap and space, the bill should specify the maximum size of a pet carrier. Passengers in other states have tried to get around the size of a pet carrier by using a large IKEA bag and cutting holes for the dog's legs.

Amtrak requires that pet owners to provide a pet carrier that is **leak proof** and well ventilated, has only one pet per carrier permitted, with a maximum weight of pet with carrier of 20 pounds.

The maximum size for pet carriers is 19" long x 14" wide x 10.5" high. As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, Amtrak does allow service animals.

Policies of Other Transit Systems

Boston - Permits large dogs during off-peak hours. During peak hours only small dogs are allowed and those dogs must be in carriers small dogs are allowed at off-peak hours.

New York City Subway and Buses - Permits small dogs during nonpeak hours if they are in a carrier. Does not permit large dogs.

Chicago Transit Authority – Permits only small dogs in carriers.

Amtrak - Only dogs and cats up to 20 pounds (combined weight of pet and carrier) on trips up to seven hours on most routes.

- Pet owners must provide a pet carrier, which may be hard or soft sided but must be leak proof and well ventilated.
- Only one pet per carrier permitted.
- Maximum weight of pet with carrier is 20 pounds.
- The maximum size for pet carriers is 19" long x 14" wide x 10.5" high.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

SB-1025

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:34:19 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/6/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marie Kouthoofd	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB1025

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and CommitteeMembers,

I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to SB1025, which seeks to allow companion animals to ride on public transportation. As a blind individual who relies solely on a highly trained and selectively bred Guide Dog for independent travel, I urge you to consider the serious risks this bill poses to people with disabilities who depend on service animals.

Guide Dogs are not simply well-trained pets; they undergo years of rigorous preparation and are bred for temperament, focus, and docility. They are selected and trained to navigate obstacles safely, and to ensure their handler's well-being. However, they have no natural defenses against aggression from other animals. Unlike pet dogs, they are trained not to react, even if faced with a threat. This makes them—and by extension, their handlers—extremely vulnerable in situations where uncontrolled animals are present. This is especially true on public transportation since there is no escape for me and my dog. If outside, I can try to avoid or even in a store, take a different aisle, but on a bus or a train, there is no escape. Quarters are close and I cannot see or predict the threat.

If a pet dog on public transportation becomes startled, lunges, or acts aggressively, the consequences for me and my Guide Dog could be devastating. A single negative encounter can undo years of specialized training, causing a Guide Dog to lose confidence or even develop anxiety in critical environments. This would not only compromise my safety but could render my dog unable to work, leaving me without a means of independent mobility. If my dog is injured, I cannot simply replace them like one would a pet—Guide Dogs are not easily nor quickly acquired. The process of training, matching, and bonding with a new Guide Dog takes months, if not years, leaving me without the ability to travel safely in the meantime.

Beyond the risk of physical harm, the presence of pet dogs on public transportation creates additional challenges for Guide Dog users. The scents, distractions, and potential for barking or lunging create an unpredictable and unsafe environment for those of us who do not have the luxury of choosing alternative transportation. Public transit is not a convenience for me—it is a necessity. Unlike pet owners who may prefer to bring their animals along, I do not have a choice in whether I rely on my Guide Dog. The idea that compensation could be offered if my dog is

harmed is insulting—no amount of money can restore my Guide Dog's training, confidence, or ability to work safely.

I love animals, and I understand the desire to have pets accompany their owners in more places. However, public transportation is not an appropriate setting for this. Without strict regulations, screening, and enforcement (which are highly unlikely to be effective), this bill creates an unacceptable risk to people with disabilities who rely on Guide Dogs for their independence and safety. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rightfully distinguishes between service animals and pets for a reason: service animals provide life-changing and often life-saving assistance that cannot be compromised.

I respectfully urge you to vote against this bill. The unintended consequences of allowing pets on public transportation far outweigh any potential benefits. The safety, independence, and rights of disabled individuals must take precedence over the convenience of pet owners. Please do not allow this bill to move forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Marie Kouthoofd And Guide Dog, Mango