

# U.S. House Clears Reps. Steve Stivers and Kathleen Rice's Legislation to Provide Service Dogs to Veterans with PTSD

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, May 13, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers (PAWS) for Veterans Therapy Act, [H.R. 1448](#), led by U.S. Reps. Steve Stivers, R-Ohio, and Kathleen Rice, D-N.Y. by an overwhelming majority vote. The measure garnered an astounding 317 Members of the House as cosponsors and will now be considered by the U.S. Senate where its companion bill, [S. 613](#), led by U.S. Sens. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., and Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz. awaits further action.

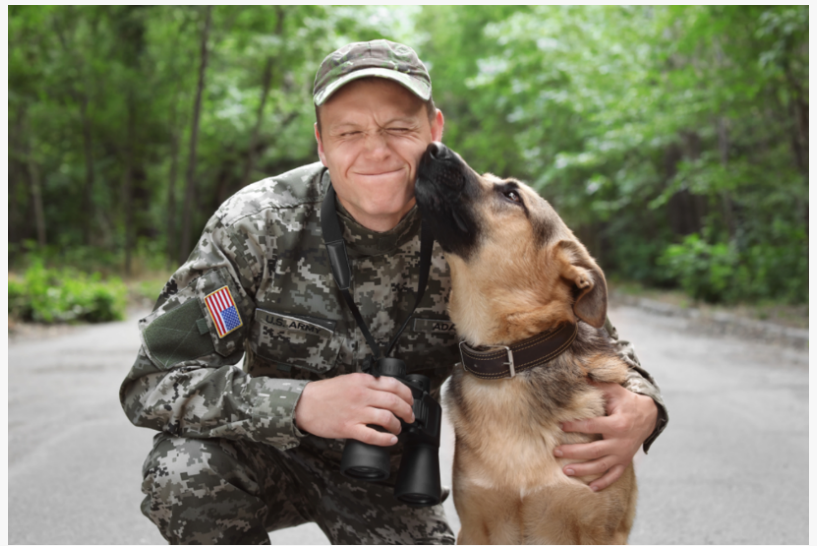


Photo: Man in military uniform with German shepherd dog, outdoors | Credit: Shutterstock Royalty-free stock photo ID: 1114507862

The measure would create a \$10 million pilot grant program at the Veterans Affairs Administration (VA) that would cover the cost of pairing disabled veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with service dogs at a cost of up to \$25,000 per veteran. Qualified nonprofit organizations that offer training for dogs and veterans would also benefit from the enactment of the legislation.

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*Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action*

“We applaud Reps. Stivers and Rice for leading the charge on this legislation to pair American heroes with animals who can help them live fuller lives,” said [Marty Irby](#), executive director at Animal Wellness Action. “Animals help people in so many ways in society, and here’s one extraordinary example of how that happens through the power of the human-animal bond.”

“Every day that we delay the passage of this bill, we lose 22 veterans to suicide, we cannot afford to wait any longer,” said U.S. Rep. Steve Stivers, R-Ohio. “We have a chance to change that by passing this bill, as it would offer evidence-based, lifesaving work-therapy by teaching the art and science of training a dog for service. I am confident that our true bipartisan collaboration will soon result in offering more veterans the treatment they need to heal.”

“Our veterans deserve access to every proven mental health resource available, including service dogs,” said U.S. Rep. Kathleen Rice, D-N.Y. “And with 20 veterans dying every single day by suicide, the PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act is not just about improving lives, it’s about saving them. I was thrilled to join Rep. Stivers and our other bipartisan co-leads to push this critical bill over the finish line in the House, and I urge my colleagues in the Senate to pass it as well.”

The Center for a Humane Economy, the Animal Wellness Foundation, American Humane, and K-9’s for Warriors also back the bill, among other organizations.

Animal Wellness Action has also worked over the past several years to secure \$5 million in federal grant funding for the Veterans Affairs’ Adaptive Sports Grant Program that provides funding for equine-assisted therapy of veterans with PTSD and other mental and physical conditions.

Animal Wellness Action (Action) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that’s why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don’t. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for



Animal Wellness Action Executive Director Marty Irby

getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Center for a Humane Economy (“the Center”) is a non-profit organization that focuses on influencing the conduct of corporations to forge a humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both.

Marty Irby

Animal Wellness Action

+1 202-821-5686

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