

# International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants

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## SOCIAL JUSTICE

### Welcome from the Chair!

Hello everyone, my name is Tom Van Winkle, clinical member and chairperson of the recently formed Social Justice Commission. I would like to take this opportunity to bri tell you about our committee and invite anyone interested in learning more about our group to contact me at the email address below.

As are all of the IAABC committees, Social Justice performs a very important function support of our members. The mission of the Social Justice Commission is to keep info of new or changing legislation, rules, ordinance, professional practices, etc. which ma affect or be of interest to the IAABC membership. That's quite a mouthful! So lets try this way - this committee gathers information about changes occurring in the industri support, consults with each other and other members of the IAABC and when deemec appropriate we issue position statements on these changes.

We are just getting started and have a lot of work to do, but it should be an exciting i look forward to the challenges ahead and welcome comments/questions from anyone might be interested in getting involved. See below for the work we have done thus fa

Members: Tom Van Winkle, Chair. Jan Gribble, Becky Schultz, Jeff Silverman

### IAABC Position Statement on Breed-Specific Legislation:

The International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC) is an organization representing professional animal trainers and animal behavior specialists. The IAABC strongly opposes any legislation specifically designed to target or discriminate against dogs based solely on their breed or appearance. The IAABC does not believe that a dog poses a danger to society solely because of its breed. Dogs can become dangerous as a result of faulty socialization, inappropriate training, poor living conditions and other factors having nothing to do with their breed. The IAABC believes that the objectives behind breed specific legislation can be met more effectively through rigorous enforcement and, where necessary, the strengthening of existing laws. We fully understand and support the need for laws to protect society, human and animal alike; however, our organization feels that any new legislation should be based on specific behaviors or actions and should not discriminate based on breed alone.

### Letter on Service Dog Language Usage

August 3, 2004

Dear Mr. Cavanaugh,

As we have not had the chance to meet, let me first introduce myself. My name is Tom Van Winkle and I am a clinical member of the International Association of Dog Behavior Consultants. I currently chair the Social Justice Commission and it is one of our responsibilities to keep abreast of new or changing laws, ordinances, practices, etc. w may be of interest to our membership. This leads me to the purpose of my contacting today.

It has come to our attention that the UKC is considering a new title for "service dogs" which refers to dogs trained for protection purposes. While we commend the UKC in its efforts to further recognize specially trained dogs, we are concerned over the use of the term "service dogs". We support the International Association of Assistance Dog Partr Guide Dog Users Inc., Assistance Dogs International and the Council of U.S. Dog Guic Schools in encouraging the UKC to choosing a different name for this title.

As service dog users and trainers, we believe that the use of the term "Service Dog" as a title may lead to confusion regarding the laws protecting the public access of service animals assisting people with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act specifically uses the term "Service Animal" and defines it as an animal "individually trained to do or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability." Additionally, various states use the term "Service Dog" in their legal code defining the term specifically for dogs assisting people with disabilities. These laws give the person with the disability the right to take their service dog where the general public is not allowed to take their pet dogs.

Creating a UKC "Service Dog" title may confuse pet owners, leading them to believe that their pet with a UKC service dog title fits the ADA's legal definition of a service animal. People may misinterpret the title believing that they are able to take their dog to places where pets are not permitted. Blurring the line between protection-trained dog dogs trained to assist people with disabilities could lead to increased access problems for people with disabilities using service dogs.

We are not asking that the UKC change its plans to title well-trained dogs, but simply that it choose a different term than "service dog" or "service animal".

We do not want to see one group's efforts set back because of the potential confusion regarding the term "service dogs".

Sincerely,

Tom Van Winkle, MBA, CABC

*IAABC – Social Justice Commission*

Veronica Sanchez, MEd, CABC

*Animal Behavior Consulting Division*

**Note: The UKC did make the requested change.**