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To Whom It May Concern:

Psychiatric Service Dog Partners is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with nearly 250 service dog users on a private Peer Guidance Group, more than that many personal and business consultations each year, and a relatively popular service dog website with over 50,000 pageviews a month. Our leadership has directed business your way for years, believing in the quality and design of many of your products.

#### I. *Our action*

We have had some hesitation in doing so due to the ID cards you have offered—I'll explain why this has concerned us below. However, we're contacting you now because community members recently brought it to our attention that in addition to selling ID cards, you are now operating a service dog registry. Because of this addition, we will no longer be able to support your business.

This is an open letter, posted on our site. We will post it through social media 24 hours after sending it to you, giving you a chance to reply first. If it weren't for this latest addition to your product line, we would have taken no action that might lower your sales. If you remove your registry and associated products, we would support you again, as before, and promptly publicly update our community to this effect.

#### II. *Our reasons*

As you note in the fine print on your site,<sup>1</sup> IDs and registration are not required by federal law. Further, they cannot be required by state or local law. The difficulties don't just lie in people misunderstanding that these products are not *necessary* to have a service dog, but especially that they are not *sufficient* for having a service dog.

The reasons I'll provide to explain this apply both to ID cards and to registries, but the addition of the registry turns the painful screw on our community even more.

##### II.a. *Making life harder through miseducation*

When service dog handlers show IDs to gatekeepers at business establishments, they are only making life harder for those handlers who do not own and carry such IDs.

Even from one encounter, a gatekeeper becomes trained to expect an ID from the next team. When

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.activedogs.com/product/2916/registry-identification-card/>

The sales pitch starts with "The Registry Identification Card provides all the information needed for your Service Dog[...]". This makes it sound like such an ID is *required* ("needed"). Due diligence is then attempted later through the sentence "*Please note that this ID/Registry is not required by the ADA and is an optional item for your comfort*".

the gatekeeper then demands to see this kind of ID from the next team that does not carry this (legally meaningless) item, this causes problems. It is stressful for both parties, and may result in illegal access denial and litigation that could have been avoided if the gatekeeper had not been inadvertently miseducated by the ID-bearing team.

We do appreciate the sales and use of *non-identifying* (and accurate!) law cards, which can be given or shown to gatekeepers to educate them. These instruments of knowledge make it *easier*, not *harder* for the next team. Disabled folks have a harder life than non-disabled people, and to make their lives more difficult does not make sense for a company that does so much to help them.

### II.b. *Wrongly leveraging ignorance*

Knowledgeable service dog users often refer to registries as "fake service dog registries", and here's why. Those who aren't in the know tend to think a registry somehow legitimizes their dog, granting them legal access for a fee. This is regardless of whether the person is actually disabled—or whether the dog has been trained to assist with the disability, or trained extensively in various environments for 1–2 years to ensure the dog is safe and healthy for the unpredictable challenges of public access.

In short, registries leverage ignorance to facilitate moral wrongs. They exist outside of the law, and end up subverting the law (even unintentionally) by misleading the public about what makes for a legitimate service dog, as described above.

In spite of any fine print you may provide, our extensive practical experience indicates that service dog registries do much more harm through misdirection than any good they could theoretically accomplish.

### III. *A clear choice lies before you*

Please reconsider these aspects of your product line, especially the straw that's breaking this camel's back—the registry. My colleagues and I have sent a lot of business your way for years because we love your products (your vests and patches), but our consciences will no longer allow us to do so if we don't see real action that puts you back on the side of the solution again.

In our minds, there is a clear choice before you about which path you want to take. We expect other leaders in the field will have similar reactions, regardless of whether you directly hear about it.

Please review this issue, and we fervently hope you will remove this registry from your product line. We look forward to posting an update that reflects well on you and allows us to continue sending deserved business your way!

Sincerely,



Bradley W. Morris  
Director of Government Relations  
on behalf of the Board of Directors  
Psychiatric Service Dog Partners