AN ACT

RELATING TO DISABILITY; RENAMING THE ASSISTANCE ANIMAL ACT AS THE "SERVICE ANIMAL ACT"; AMENDING THE SERVICE ANIMAL ACT TO PROVIDE FOR QUALIFIED SERVICE DOGS AND QUALIFIED SERVICE MINIATURE HORSES; ENACTING A NEW SECTION OF THE SERVICE ANIMAL ACT TO PROHIBIT A PERSON FROM KNOWINGLY PRESENTING AS A QUALIFIED SERVICE ANIMAL ANY ANIMAL OTHER THAN A QUALIFIED SERVICE ANIMAL; PRESCRIBING CIVIL AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 28-11-1.1 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2005, Chapter 224, Section 1) is amended to read:

"28-11-1.1. SHORT TITLE.--Chapter 28, Article 11 NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Service Animal Act"."

SECTION 2. Section 28-11-2 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1989, Chapter 242, Section 1, as amended) is amended to read:

"28-11-2. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Service Animal Act:

A. "emotional support animal", "comfort animal" or "therapy animal" means an animal selected to accompany an individual with a disability that does not work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability and does not accompany at all times an individual with a disability;

B. "qualified service animal" means any qualified
service dog or qualified service miniature horse that has been or is being trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability; but "qualified service animal" does not include a pet, an emotional support animal, a comfort animal or a therapy animal;

C. "qualified service dog" means a dog that has been trained or is being trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; and

D. "qualified service miniature horse" means a miniature horse that has been trained or is being trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities."

SECTION 3. Section 28-11-3 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1989, Chapter 242, Section 2, as amended) is amended to read:

"28-11-3. ADMITTANCE OF QUALIFIED SERVICE ANIMAL.--

A. Notwithstanding any other provision of law:

(1) a person with a disability who is using a qualified service animal shall be admitted to any building open to the public and to all other public accommodations and shall be allowed access to all common carriers; provided that the qualified service animal is under the control of an owner, a trainer or a handler of the qualified service
animal. A person shall not deny an individual with a qualified service animal entry to a building open to the public or to any public accommodation or deny access to a common carrier, regardless of any policy of denying to pets entry to that building, public accommodation or common carrier. A person shall not be required to pay any additional charges for the qualified service animal, but may be liable for any damage done by the qualified service animal; provided that persons without disabilities would be liable for similar damage; and

(2) in an emergency requiring transportation or relocation of the owner or trainer of the qualified service animal, to the extent practicable, accommodations shall be made for the qualified service animal to remain or be reunited with the owner, trainer or handler. When accommodations cannot be made for allowing the qualified service animal to remain with the owner, trainer or handler, the qualified service animal shall be placed pursuant to instructions provided by the owner, trainer or handler.

B. This section does not require a public accommodation or common carrier to permit an owner, trainer or handler using a qualified service animal to have access to a public accommodation or common carrier in circumstances in which the individual's use of the qualified service animal poses a direct threat of significant harm to the health or
safety of others."

SECTION 4. Section 28-11-4 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1989, Chapter 242, Section 3, as amended) is amended to read:

"28-11-4. PENALTY.--

A. A person who violates a provision of the Service Animal Act is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be sentenced in accordance with the provisions of Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978.

B. Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude any other remedy otherwise available pursuant to common law or other law of this state."

SECTION 5. Section 28-11-5 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1999, Chapter 113, Section 1, as amended) is amended to read:

"28-11-5. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE--INTERFERENCE WITH QUALIFIED SERVICE ANIMALS PROHIBITED--CRIMINAL AND CIVIL PENALTIES.--

A. The legislature finds that unrestrained animals constitute a danger to qualified service animals and public safety. The purpose of this section is to protect persons with disabilities and qualified service animals from attack by unrestrained animals.

B. It is unlawful for any person, with no legitimate reason, to:

(1) intentionally interfere with the use of a qualified service animal by harassing or obstructing the
owner, trainer or handler of the qualified service animal or
the qualified service animal; or

(2) intentionally fail or refuse to control
the person's unrestrained animal, which animal interferes
with or obstructs the owner, trainer or handler of the
qualified service animal.

C. The provisions of this section shall not apply
to unrestrained animals on private property not open to the
public.

D. A person who violates the provisions of this
section is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall
be punished pursuant to Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978. A person
convicted under this section may be ordered to pay
restitution, including, but not limited to, actual damages.

E. Nothing in this section shall be construed to
preclude any other remedies otherwise available pursuant to
common law or the NMSA 1978."

SECTION 6. A new section of the Service Animal Act is
enacted to read:

"PROHIBITION OF FALSE PRESENTATION OF ANIMAL AS A
QUALIFIED SERVICE ANIMAL.--

A. A person shall not knowingly present as a
qualified service animal any animal that does not meet a
definition of "qualified service animal" pursuant to Section
28-11-2 NMSA 1978. A person who violates the provisions of
this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished pursuant to Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978.

B. Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude any other remedies otherwise available pursuant to common law or the NMSA 1978.