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Office of the International President

September 3, 2025

Dear Congressman Hoyer,

On behalf of the IAM Union, I extend our deepest appreciation for your decades of principled leadership and your unwavering commitment to the well-being of America's Veterans. Your support for H.R. 1448 PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act (2021-2022) was not only instrumental in its passage but it was also indicative of your lifelong dedication to those who have served our nation.

As you once said, "Our commitment to America's Veterans and their families must continue long after they take off the uniform and return to civilian life." That sentiment continues to guide your work, and it resonates deeply with our union and the thousands of Veterans we proudly represent.

Thanks to your advocacy, 38 U.S.C. 1714 now authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide service dogs to Veterans with mental health conditions. However, the corresponding regulation, 38 C.F.R. 17.148, has not yet been updated. As it stands, Veterinary Health Insurance Benefit (VHIB) eligibility remains limited to Veterans with mobility impairments, excluding those whose primary disabilities are mental health related.

We respectfully request your support in urging the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to initiate rulemaking to amend 38 C.F.R. 17.148 so that:

- Veterans with mental health conditions are explicitly recognized as eligible for VHIB.
- The regulation aligns with the expanded authority granted under 38 U.S.C. 1714(c)(3) and (e).
- The VA can provide equitable access to service dog benefits for all qualifying Veterans, regardless of mobility status.

This change would close a critical gap between legislative intent and regulatory practice. It would also honor the spirit of the PAWS Act and your vision for a more compassionate and responsive VA system.

Congressman Hoyer, your legacy is one of service, integrity, and fierce advocacy for those who've worn the uniform. We are proud to stand with you and would be honored to collaborate with your office to ensure that no Veteran is denied the support they need due to outdated criteria.

Faternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Bryant", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Brian Bryant
IAM
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT