

Dear Mr. Clerk,

On behalf of the Canadian Veteran Service Dog Unit, a charity that trains dogs and injured veterans to be a service dog team at no cost to the veteran, I would like to comment on today's testimony.

As we said in a previous email, Medric Cousineau speaks for wounded veterans across Canada. Everything that he said was important and needs to be considered if not implemented. Our organization follows the British Columbia legislation and we comply with established international standards when it comes to service dog training. We believe there needs to be a national standard for service dog training and service dog performance, not one or the other. But we do not believe that implementing a program that is run and supervised by *Wounded Warriors* alone is the answer. There are regional providers like us who are charities and we do not see service dogs as an industry. We pay our trainers for services they provide, but we are not organized around profit like the industry is and we are not paying bureaucrats like *Wounded Warriors* to operate and administer our program. There are, here and there, local solutions for providing service dogs to injured veterans that do not involve industry and profit. We are "Veterans helping Veterans," please don't take that away because you want a one size fits all solution.

We regret that you only heard from one Canadian veteran today who is knowledgeable about service dogs, their efficacy, training and pairing with a wounded veteran. We are concerned that you know very little about the history of veteran's charities and organizations like War Amps, the Royal Canadian Legion, the Army, Navy, Air Force Veteran's Association, various veteran's hospitals and other veteran's charities. All of these veteran's organizations were formed in a time of crisis when wounded veterans needed help, just like many service dog organizations formed in the last fifteen years in response to a need. In a sentence, the formation of the Royal Canadian Legion (and other national veteran's organizations following WW1) meant there was a national veteran's organization but it worked to level and destroy local variations, local voices and local influence. If you decide that you will "pull off the shelf," the *Wounded Warriors* program and implement it as the national program you will kill a regional, effective, and good program like ours. As we said, Medric speaks for us but we don't want our program to die because VAC imposes a national program on all of us run by *Wounded Warriors*.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. R.M.A. (Maj. Ret'd) "Sandy" Scott MSM CD1
Secretary to the Board, CVSDU.