

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 223

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 28, 2023

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman BETH SAWYER

District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Bergen, Assemblywomen Swift, Matsikoudis, Assemblymen Guardian, Simonsen, Assemblywoman McCarthy Patrick, Assemblymen Sauickie, Umba, Rooney, Clifton, Thomson, McClellan, Auth, Space, Catalano, McGuckin, Rumpf, Assemblywoman Gove, Assemblymen Scharfenberger, Wirths, DePhillips, Webber, DiMaio, Barranco, Assemblywomen Eulner, Piperno, Dunn, Assemblyman Peterson, Assemblywoman N.Munoz, Assemblymen Torrissi, S.Kean, Assemblywoman DeFuccio, Assemblymen DeAngelo, Karabinchak, Verrelli, Calabrese, Mukherji, Assemblywoman Murphy and Assemblyman Freiman

SYNOPSIS

Designates March 16 as “Paws Healing Heroes Day” in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/21/2023)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating March 16 as “Paws Healing
2 Heroes Day” in New Jersey.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey has a current veteran population of over
5 300,000 spanning World War II through to present day conflicts;
6 and
7 **WHEREAS**, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs
8 estimates that 29 percent of veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom
9 and Operation Enduring Freedom may experience post-traumatic
10 stress disorder (PTSD); and
11 **WHEREAS**, Scientific studies also estimate that upwards of 28 percent
12 of veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring
13 Freedom may experience traumatic brain injury (TBI); and
14 **WHEREAS**, A growing body of scientific research has shown that
15 service dogs can also reduce the severity and occurrence of
16 symptoms of PTSD, including anxiety, depression, and suicidal
17 ideation; and
18 **WHEREAS**, Among other assistance animals, service dogs have
19 specifically been long used to support persons with physical,
20 developmental, and intellectual disabilities, including persons with
21 TBI; and
22 **WHEREAS**, Service dogs have also been trained to specifically support
23 veterans with military sexual trauma and seizure disorder; and
24 **WHEREAS**, In recognition of the role that service dogs have in
25 assisting America’s veterans, the “PAWS for Veterans Therapy
26 Act” was enacted by Congress in 2021 in an effort to expand the
27 availability of service dogs; and
28 **WHEREAS**, Nevertheless, the training of dogs, including rescue dogs,
29 to become service dogs, and more specifically service dogs that
30 meet the needs of veterans, falls primarily upon community non-
31 profit organizations that depend on charitable donations; and
32 **WHEREAS**, Paws Healing Heroes, of Glassboro, is one such
33 organization in New Jersey dedicated to training service dogs for
34 pairing with veterans; and
35 **WHEREAS**, The average cost to rescue, train, and present a service dog
36 to a veteran can be \$3,000 to \$5,000, which is often not covered by
37 insurance or other veterans’ benefits; and
38 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey highlights the important role that assistance
39 animals play in the lives of persons with disabilities through
40 “Assistance Animal Recognition Day” on Wednesday of the second
41 week of August; and
42 **WHEREAS**, The general public should also be made aware of the
43 unique and important role of service dogs in assisting veterans;
44 now, therefore,
45
46 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
47 *State of New Jersey:*

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3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

Designating “Paws Healing Heroes Day” will promote greater awareness of the unique role of service dogs in assisting veterans.