

# SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 33

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator KRISTIN M. CORRADO**

**District 40 (Bergen, Essex and Passaic)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senator Polistina**

**SYNOPSIS**

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

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



**SJR33 CORRADO**

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:*

**SJR33 CORRADO**

3

1       1. March 16 of each year is designated “Paws Healing Heroes  
2 Day” in the State of New Jersey in recognition of the special role of  
3 service dogs in assisting America’s veterans with such conditions as  
4 traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, military  
5 sexual trauma, and seizure disorder.

6  
7       2. The Governor is requested to annually issue a proclamation  
8 recognizing the day and calling upon public officials and the  
9 citizens of this State to observe the day with appropriate activities  
10 and programs.

11  
12       3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

13  
14

**STATEMENT**

15  
16  
17       This joint resolution designates March 16 as “Paws Healing  
18 Heroes Day” in New Jersey.

19       Service dogs play an important role in assisting veterans with  
20 traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD),  
21 military sexual trauma, and seizure disorder. It is estimated that 29  
22 percent of veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation  
23 Enduring Freedom may experience PTSD, and 28 percent of  
24 veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring  
25 Freedom may experience TBI. New Jersey has a current veteran  
26 population of over 300,000.

27       However, despite federal law to expand the availability of  
28 service dogs to veterans, the training and placement of service dogs  
29 falls primarily upon community non-profit organizations that  
30 depend on charitable donations, such as Paws Healing Heroes of  
31 Glassboro. The average cost to rescue, train, and present a service  
32 dog to a veteran can be \$3,000 to \$5,000, which is not covered by  
33 insurance or other veterans’ benefits.

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