



## **DON'T GET BITTEN FOR NOT KNOWING THE LAW!**

### **Advisory Notice of Colorado's New Law Regarding Service & Assistance Animals**

- During the 2015-16 legislative session, HB16-1426 was passed and will become effective on **January 1, 2017**
- Fines under this new offense range from **\$50 - \$500**
- In order to be charged, a person **must have had a previous warning** – either written or verbal – regarding the law
- Under the new law, it is a petty offense to **intentionally misrepresent that an animal is a service animal** – this means it is a crime to knowingly take a non-service animal into a **public business** under the guise that it is actually a service animal
- It is also a petty offense to **intentionally misrepresent that your animal is an assistance, companion, or emotional support animal** in order to avoid pet fees or have an animal in **housing** that otherwise does not allow animals
- In the context of housing, the requirement in the new law that a doctor write a letter supporting that the person has a disability AND needs the animal **does NOT trump federal law** – while a doctor CAN write a letter supporting both factors, the need for the animal can also come from anyone “in the know” and does not have to be from a medical professional – that said, a letter from a doctor supporting both that you have a disability AND a disability-related need for the animal serves as an **affirmative defense in the context of housing** if an individual is charged under this law

For additional information regarding service and assistance animals,  
please visit our website at [www.disabilitylawco.org](http://www.disabilitylawco.org)

**\*\*\* DISCLAIMER: This is not intended as legal advice, but rather for informational purposes only. Always consult a lawyer if you have questions about your legal rights. \*\*\***