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Pet Owners: Pretending Your Pet Is A Therapy Animal Hurts Everyone
spcaLA recommends honesty and open dialogue to create pet-friendly policies

Los Angeles, CA – Sue Manning, of the Associated Press, reported Thursday that owners are passing their pets off as service animals with alarming frequency. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (**spcaLA**) urges pet owners to respect the law, and use honest dialogue with business owners and public officials to change pet policies.

“Trying to sneak in the back door by pretending your pet is a service animal hurts everyone,” said spcaLA President, Madeline Bernstein. “Asking for forgiveness may seem easier than asking for permission, but is bringing your dog to the grocery store really important enough to discredit those suffering from epilepsy, diabetes, PTSD and other conditions who rely on their service dogs?”

Pets are pets – they are not necessarily trained to react appropriately in a variety of situations, and therefore could become destructive, aggressive or just plain stressed. Continued abuse of the system could lead to stricter laws which could make things more difficult for those who legitimately rely on a service animal.

spcaLA recommends responsible pet ownership, respect for those who truly need these service dogs, and an open dialogue with city, state, and other officials, as well as the business community, to find a happy medium in which pets and people may peacefully coexist.

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Society for the Prevention Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA) is an independent, nonprofit animal welfare organization serving Southern California since 1877. There is no national SPCA, parent organization, or umbrella group that provides financial support to spcaLA. Donations run programs and services including Cruelty Investigation, Disaster Animal Response Team, Humane Education, and a variety of shelter services.