The American Legion

OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1608 "K" STREET, N.W. ★ WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006 ★
(202) 263-2986 ★

July 22, 2016

The Honorable Deb Fischer
United States Senate
383 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Fischer:

On behalf of the 2 million members of The American Legion, I express our support for **S. 3132,** the *"Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers (PAWS) Act of 2016"*. Although The American Legion supports the legislation, we support opening the PAWS Act to cover all veterans who would be eligible for the pilot program.

S. 3132 would create a five-year $10 million pilot program that pairs veterans who served on active duty in the Armed Forces on or after September 11, 2001, and for veterans who have been diagnosed with PTSD rated at a severity level of three or four on the Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS-5) for Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) with a service dog. Eligible veterans must have also completed an evidence-based treatment program and remain significantly symptomatic by clinical standards. This legislation is important to veterans because it allows the use of service dogs to assist in the therapy plan for injured veterans returning home from war with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Service dogs can act as an effective complementary therapy treatment component, especially for those veterans who suffer on a daily basis from the physical and psychological wounds of war.

According to Resolution No. 99: *Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, passed at the 2015 National Convention, The American Legion urges Congress to provide oversight and funding to the VA for innovative, evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in treating various illnesses and disabilities.

The American Legion applauds your leadership in addressing this critical issue facing our nation's veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

DALE BARNETT
National Commander