**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sale of Fake Service Dog Products Needs to Stop**

Help Non-profit Canine Companions for Independence Take Action During
International Assistance Dog Week

SANTA ROSA, CA – There are an alarming number of Internet companies that sell assistance dog vests and identification to anyone who wants to purchase them. The fake certification allows people to claim their untrained pet dogs are service dogs so they will be permitted inside grocery stores, restaurants and other public places where family pets are otherwise not allowed.

As a result of this fraudulent practice, people with disabilities who have a legitimate need for an assistance dog face added discrimination and are being denied access to public places, which is in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

During International Assistance Dog Week, Canine Companions is rallying supporters in the assistance dog, disability and dog-loving communities to send a message to the U.S. Department of Justice that the online sale of fraudulent service dog products needs to stop.

These imposters make life more difficult for people like Alex Wegman every day. Alex is paralyzed, and her highly trained Canine Companions Service Dog, Bright is prepared to accompany Alex wherever she might need help. That includes places like restaurants and grocery stores where family pets are not allowed.

"When people slap a vest on an untrained dog, it makes the lives of those of us who rely on our dogs more difficult," states Alex.

But some misguided people outfit their untrained family dogs with fraudulent assistance dog credentials to get them the same all-access pass. When these dogs are in places they shouldn’t be, a lot of problems can occur.

Take action to stop this fraud and urge the Department of Justice to crack down on the sale of fake service dog products by signing the letter at cci.org/stopfraud.

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**About Canine Companions for Independence:** Canine Companions for Independence is the largest non-profit provider of trained assistance dogs with five regional training centers across the country. Established in 1975, Canine Companions provides highly trained assistance dogs to children and adults with disabilities and is recognized worldwide for the excellence of its dogs, and quality and longevity of the matches it makes between dogs and people. There is no charge for the dog, its training and on-going follow-up services. For more information, visit cci.org or call 1-800-572-BARK.