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Therapy Dogs Provided Much-Needed Stress Relief on Capitol Hill

- Wet noses and wagging tails greeted congressional staff amid the first impeachment hearing Wednesday, November 13 -

WASHINGTON – Pet Partners, the nation’s leading organization in registering therapy animals for animal-assisted interventions, and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC), the advocacy voice for the responsible pet care community, teamed up to bring therapy dogs to Capitol Hill on Wednesday – the same day public impeachment hearings began. Stress levels were high in the halls of Congress, but in the Rayburn and Hart office buildings there were steady streams of staffers de-stressing with wet noses and wagging tails.

Hundreds of staffers, visitors and more than a few members of Congress participated in the Meet the Pets event where attendees were invited to cuddle up next to a therapy animal and learn more about the beneficial impacts of animal-assisted interventions and the human-animal bond.

“We wanted to provide members of both parties a nonpartisan topic that everyone could agree on—and that is the health and joy pets bring to our lives,” said Mary Margaret Callahan, Chief Mission Officer at Pet Partners. “There was a lot happening on Capitol Hill and we were happy that our therapy dogs could provide stress relief, happiness, and friendly interaction to those who needed it.”

Scientific research shows that the human-animal bond has a positive impact on human health and well-being, including cardiovascular disease, stress, blood pressure, sleep, depression, and anxiety. Companion animals have even been shown to help people increase communication and social connections.

“Every time we bring therapy animals to Capitol Hill, members of Congress and their staff come in droves to take a break from their demanding workloads,” said Mike Bober, PIJAC

president and CEO. “We at PIJAC work to ensure that responsible prospective pet owners are able to bring a healthy pet into their home, so we were eager to let staffers who may not have pets at home experience the benefits of interacting with therapy animals, even if just for the day.”

For images from the event, interview opportunities or additional information, please contact Jamie Baxter, jamie@theimpetusagency.com.

***Pet Partners** is the national leader in demonstrating and promoting the health and wellness benefits of animal-assisted therapy, activities, and education. Since the organization’s inception in 1977, the science proving these benefits has become indisputable. With more than 13,000 registered teams making more than 3 million visits annually, Pet Partners serves as the nation’s most prestigious nonprofit registering handlers of multiple species as volunteer teams. Pet Partners teams visit with patients in recovery, people with intellectual disabilities, seniors living with Alzheimer’s, students, veterans with PTSD, and those approaching end of life, improving human health and well-being through the human-animal bond. With the recent release of its Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Interventions and international expansion, Pet Partners is globally recognized as the industry gold standard. For more information on Pet Partners, visit petpartners.org.*

*Since 1970, the **Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC)** has represented the experience and expertise of the responsible pet care community to legislative, regulatory, and governing bodies in order to promote animal well-being and responsible pet ownership, foster environmental stewardship, and ensure the availability of healthy pets. It is PIJAC’s goal to make sure that pets are well-taken care of throughout their lives. PIJAC members include retailers, companion animal suppliers, manufacturers, wholesale distributors, manufacturers’ representatives, pet hobbyists, and other trade organizations. For more information, visit pijac.org.*

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