

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 226 — Care for Retired Police Dogs

by Appropriations Committee and Senators Powell, Burgess, Perry, Pizzo, Stewart, Torres, and Wright

The bill creates the Care for Retired Police Dogs Program. The program will provide reimbursement for up to \$1,500 of annual veterinary costs associated with caring for a retired police dog by the former handler or adopter who incurs the costs. The program will be administered and managed by a not-for-profit corporation in a contractual arrangement with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement after a competitive grant award process.

The bill requires that the program receive valid documentation of the dog's retirement from a law enforcement agency or correctional agency and that the dog served for 5 years or more. If the dog served more than one agency during its career, documentation from two or more law enforcement agencies or correctional agencies showing a total of at least 5 years of service is acceptable. Valid documentation is also required if the dog served 3 years or more with one or more law enforcement or correctional agencies, was injured in the line of duty while serving with a law enforcement or correctional agency, and retired from the agency the dog was serving with at the time of the injury due to injury. A valid paid invoice from the veterinarian for veterinary care is required in order for reimbursement of veterinary costs to occur.

The bill includes an appropriation of \$300,000 in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund for the purpose of implementing and administering the program.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2022.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 117-0