

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to care for retired law enforcement
3 dogs; creating s. 943.69, F.S.; providing a short
4 title; providing definitions; providing legislative
5 findings; creating the Care for Retired Law
6 Enforcement Dogs Program within the Department of Law
7 Enforcement; requiring the department to contract with
8 a corporation not for profit to administer the program
9 and providing criteria therefor; providing specific
10 procedures for how funds will be disbursed for the
11 veterinary care of eligible retired law enforcement
12 dogs; limiting the amount of funds available for any
13 eligible retired law enforcement dog in any one year;
14 providing for the deposit of program funds; providing
15 for the reversion of funds to the department under
16 certain circumstances; providing for the carryforward
17 of unexpended appropriations for use in the program up
18 to certain limits; providing rulemaking authority;
19 providing an annual appropriation; providing an
20 effective date.

21
22 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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24 Section 1. Section 943.69, Florida Statutes, is created to
25 read:

26 943.69 Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program Act.—

27 (1) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the "Care
 28 for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program Act."

29 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

30 (a) "Law enforcement agency" means a lawfully established
 31 state or local public agency having primary responsibility for
 32 the prevention and detection of crime or the enforcement of the
 33 penal, traffic, highway, regulatory, game, immigration, postal,
 34 customs, or controlled substance laws.

35 (b) "Retired law enforcement dog" means any dog that was
 36 in the service of or employed by a law enforcement agency in
 37 this state for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection
 38 of criminal activity, enforcement of laws, or apprehension of
 39 offenders but that no longer serves in the capacity of a law
 40 enforcement dog. The retired law enforcement dog must have
 41 received certification in obedience and apprehension work from a
 42 certifying organization such as the National Police Canine
 43 Association or other certifying organization.

44 (c) "Veterinarian" has the same meaning as provided in s.
 45 474.202.

46 (d) "Veterinary care" means any veterinary medical service
 47 described in s. 474.202(9) or s. 474.202(13). The term includes
 48 annual wellness examinations, vaccines, internal and external
 49 parasite prevention treatments, testing and treatment of
 50 illnesses and diseases, medications, emergency care and
 51 surgeries, specialties of veterinary medicine such as veterinary
 52 oncology, and euthanasia, if each of the services is provided by

53 a veterinarian. The term also includes cremation.

54 (3) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—The Legislature finds that:

55 (a) Law enforcement dogs have become an integral part of
56 many law enforcement efforts statewide, including suspect
57 apprehension through tracking and searching, evidence location,
58 drug and bomb detection, and search and rescue operations.

59 (b) Law enforcement agencies agree that the use of law
60 enforcement dogs is an extremely cost-effective means for crime
61 control and that these dogs possess skills and abilities that
62 frequently exceed that of existing technology.

63 (c) The work of law enforcement dogs is often dangerous
64 and can cause these dogs to incur injuries at a rate higher than
65 the rate of injuries that occurs with nonworking dogs.

66 (d) Law enforcement dogs provide significant contributions
67 to the residents of this state.

68 (4) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Care for Retired Law
69 Enforcement Dogs Program is created within the department to
70 provide a stable funding source for former handlers and adopters
71 of retired law enforcement dogs to provide veterinary care for
72 these dogs.

73 (5) ADMINISTRATION.—The department shall contract with a
74 corporation not for profit organized under chapter 617 to
75 administer and manage the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs
76 Program. Notwithstanding the competitive sealed bid procedures
77 required under chapter 287, the department shall enter into a
78 contract with a corporation that:

79 (a) Is dedicated to the protection or care of retired law
 80 enforcement dogs.

81 (b) Holds exempt status under s. 501(a) of the Internal
 82 Revenue Code as an organization described in s. 501(c)(3) of the
 83 Internal Revenue Code.

84 (c) Has held its exempt status for at least 5 years.

85 (d) Agrees to be subject to review and audit at the
 86 discretion of the Auditor General to ensure accurate accounting
 87 and disbursement of state funds.

88 (e) Demonstrates the ability to effectively and
 89 efficiently disseminate information and assist former handlers
 90 and adopters of retired law enforcement dogs in understanding
 91 the provisions of this section.

92 (6) FUNDING.—

93 (a) The corporation shall be the disbursing authority for
 94 funds appropriated by the Legislature to the department for the
 95 Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program. These funds shall
 96 be disbursed upon receipt of:

97 1. Valid documentation from the law enforcement agency
 98 from which the dog retired verifying that the dog was in the
 99 service of or employed by such agency.

100 2. A valid invoice, submitted by the former handler or
 101 adopter of a retired law enforcement dog, from a veterinarian
 102 for veterinary care provided in the state to a retired law
 103 enforcement dog.

104 (b) Annual disbursements to any former handler or adopter

105 of a retired law enforcement dog are limited to \$1,500 per
106 retired law enforcement dog. A former handler or adopter of a
107 retired law enforcement dog may not accumulate unused funds from
108 one year for use in a future year.

109 (c) A former handler or adopter of a retired law
110 enforcement dog who seeks reimbursement for veterinary services
111 shall not receive reimbursement if funds for the Care for
112 Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program are depleted in the year
113 for which the reimbursement is sought.

114 (d) Funds appropriated for the Care for Retired Law
115 Enforcement Dogs Program shall be held in the Operating Trust
116 Fund of the department in a separate depository account in the
117 name of the corporation and subject to the provisions of the
118 contract with the department. The contract must provide that:

119 1. The corporation may not receive administrative fees,
120 including salaries and benefits, greater than 10 percent of
121 appropriated funds.

122 2. Any funds held in the separate depository account in
123 the name of the corporation must revert to the department if the
124 contract expires or is terminated.

125 (e) Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351,
126 the Executive Office of the Governor shall, on July 1 of each
127 year, certify forward all unexpended funds appropriated pursuant
128 to this section. However, in no event shall the fund balance for
129 the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program exceed
130 \$400,000.

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131 (7) RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.—The department shall adopt rules
132 and prescribe forms to implement the requirements of this
133 section.

134 Section 2. Beginning in the 2014-2015 fiscal year and each
135 year thereafter, the sum of \$300,000 in recurring funds is
136 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of
137 Law Enforcement for the purpose of implementing the Care for
138 Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program as created by this act.

139 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014.