

By Senator Abruzzo

25-01460-14

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to care for retired law enforcement
3 dogs; providing a short title; providing definitions;
4 creating the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs
5 Program within the Department of Law Enforcement;
6 requiring the department to contract with a not-for-
7 profit corporation meeting specified criteria to
8 administer the program; providing specific procedures
9 for disbursement of funds for the veterinary care of
10 eligible retired law enforcement dogs; limiting the
11 amount of annual funds available for an eligible
12 retired law enforcement dog; providing for the deposit
13 of program funds; providing for the reversion of funds
14 to the department under certain circumstances;
15 providing for the carryforward of unexpended
16 appropriations for use in the program up to certain
17 limits; providing an annual appropriation; providing
18 an effective date.

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20 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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

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

25 (a) "Law enforcement agency" means a state or local public
26 agency that has primary responsibility for the prevention and
27 detection of crime or the enforcement of the penal, traffic,
28 highway, regulatory, game, immigration, postal, customs, or
29 controlled substance laws.

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

39 (c) "Veterinarian" has the same meaning as provided in s.
40 474.202, Florida Statutes.

41 (d) "Veterinary care" means any veterinary medical service
42 described in s. 474.202(9) or s. 474.202(13), Florida Statutes,
43 and includes annual wellness examinations, vaccines, internal
44 and external parasite prevention treatments, testing and
45 treatment of illnesses and diseases, prescribing and dispensing
46 medications, emergency care and surgeries, care provided in
47 specialties of veterinary medicine such as veterinary oncology,
48 and euthanasia, when provided by a veterinarian. The term also
49 includes cremation.

50 (3) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—

51 (a) In recent years, law enforcement dogs have become an
52 integral part of many law enforcement efforts statewide,
53 including suspect apprehension through tracking and searching,
54 evidence location, drug and bomb detection, and search and
55 rescue operations. Law enforcement agencies agree that the use
56 of law enforcement dogs is an extremely cost-effective means for
57 crime control and that these dogs possess skills and abilities
58 that frequently exceed that of existing technology.

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59 (b) Recognizing that the work of law enforcement dogs is
60 often dangerous and can cause these dogs to incur injuries at a
61 rate higher than the rate of injuries that occurs with
62 nonworking dogs, and recognizing the significant contributions
63 that law enforcement dogs provide to the residents of this
64 state, the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program is
65 created within the Department of Law Enforcement to provide a
66 stable funding source to allow former handlers and adopters of
67 retired law enforcement dogs to provide them with veterinary
68 care.

69 (4) ADMINISTRATION.—The Department of Law Enforcement shall
70 contract with a not-for-profit corporation organized under
71 chapter 617, Florida Statutes, to administer and manage the Care
72 for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program. Notwithstanding the
73 competitive sealed bid procedures required under chapter 287,
74 Florida Statutes, the department shall enter into a contract
75 with a corporation that:

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

78 (b) Holds tax-exempt status under s. 501(a) of the Internal
79 Revenue Code as an organization described in s. 501(c)(3) of the
80 code.

81 (c) Has held its tax-exempt status for at least 5 years.

82 (d) Agrees to be subject to review and audit at the
83 discretion of the Auditor General to ensure accurate accounting
84 and disbursement of state funds.

85 (e) Demonstrates the ability to effectively and efficiently
86 disseminate information and assist former handlers and adopters
87 of retired law enforcement dogs in understanding the provisions

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88 of this section.

89 (f) Receives administrative fees, including salaries and
90 benefits, not to exceed 10 percent of appropriated funds.

91 (5) FUNDING.—

92 (a) The corporation shall be the disbursing authority for
93 funds appropriated by the Legislature to the Department of Law
94 Enforcement for the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs
95 Program. These funds shall be disbursed upon receipt of a valid
96 invoice, submitted by the former handler or adopter of a retired
97 law enforcement dog, from a veterinarian in this state for
98 veterinary care provided to a retired law enforcement dog.

99 (b) Annual disbursements to any former handler or adopter
100 of a retired law enforcement dog are limited to \$1,500 per
101 retired law enforcement dog. A former handler or adopter of a
102 retired law enforcement dog may not accumulate unused funds from
103 one year for use in a future year.

104 (c) A former handler or adopter of a retired law
105 enforcement dog who seeks reimbursement for veterinary services
106 may not receive reimbursement if funds for the Care for Retired
107 Law Enforcement Dogs Program are depleted in the year for which
108 the reimbursement is sought.

109 (d) Funds appropriated for the Care for Retired Law
110 Enforcement Dogs Program shall be held in the Operating Trust
111 Fund of the Department of Law Enforcement in a separate
112 depository account in the name of the corporation and subject to
113 the provisions of the contract with the department. The contract
114 must provide that any funds held in the separate depository
115 account in the name of the corporation must revert to the
116 department if the contract expires or is terminated.

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117 Notwithstanding s. 216.301, Florida Statutes, and pursuant to s.
118 216.351, Florida Statutes, the Executive Office of the Governor
119 shall, on July 1 of each year, certify forward all unexpended
120 funds appropriated pursuant to this section. However, the fund
121 balance for the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program
122 may not exceed \$400,000.

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

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