

By Senator Abruzzo

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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; defining terms; providing legislative findings;
5 creating the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs
6 Program within the Department of Law Enforcement;
7 requiring the department to contract with a
8 corporation not for profit to administer and manage
9 the program; providing requirements for the
10 corporation not for profit; providing requirements for
11 the disbursement of funds for the veterinary care of
12 eligible retired law enforcement dogs; placing an
13 annual cap on the amount of funds available for the
14 care of an eligible retired law enforcement dog;
15 prohibiting a former handler or adopter from receiving
16 reimbursement if funds are depleted for the year for
17 which such reimbursement is sought; providing for
18 administrative fees; requiring the department to adopt
19 rules; providing an 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.-

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

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

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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 a dog that was
36 previously in the service of or employed by a law enforcement
37 agency in this state for the principal purpose of aiding in the
38 detection of criminal activity, enforcement of laws, or
39 apprehension of offenders and that received certification in
40 obedience and apprehension work from a certifying organization
41 such as the National Police Canine Association or other
42 certifying organization.

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

45 (d) "Veterinary care" means a veterinary medical service
46 specified in s. 474.202 which is provided by a veterinarian
47 licensed under chapter 474. The term includes annual wellness
48 examinations, vaccines, internal and external parasite
49 prevention treatments, testing and treatment of illnesses and
50 diseases, medications, emergency care and surgeries, specialty
51 care such as veterinary oncology, euthanasia, and cremation.

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

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

58 (b) Law enforcement agencies agree that the use of law

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59 enforcement dogs is an extremely cost-effective means of crime
60 control and that these dogs possess skills and abilities that
61 frequently exceed those of existing technology;

62 (c) The service of law enforcement dogs is often dangerous
63 and can expose them to injury at a rate higher than that of
64 nonservice dogs; and

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

67 (4) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Care for Retired Law
68 Enforcement Dogs Program is created within the Department of Law
69 Enforcement to provide a stable funding source for veterinary
70 care provided to these dogs.

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

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

79 (b) Is exempt from taxation under s. 501(a) of the Internal
80 Revenue Code as an organization described in s. 501(c)(3) of
81 that code;

82 (c) Has maintained such tax-exempt status for at least 5
83 years;

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

87 (e) Demonstrates the ability to effectively and efficiently

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88 disseminate information and to assist former handlers and
89 adopters of retired law enforcement dogs in complying with this
90 section.

91 (6) FUNDING.—

92 (a) The corporation not for profit shall be the disbursing
93 authority for funds appropriated by the Legislature to the
94 department for the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs
95 Program. These funds shall be disbursed upon receipt of:

96 1. Valid documentation from the law enforcement agency from
97 which the dog retired which verifies that the dog was in the
98 service of or employed by such agency; and

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

103 (b) Annual disbursements to a former handler or adopter to
104 reimburse him or her for the cost of care provided to a retired
105 law enforcement dog may not exceed \$1,500 per dog. A former
106 handler or adopter of a retired law enforcement dog may not
107 accumulate unused funds from a current year for use in a future
108 year.

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

114 (7) ADMINISTRATIVE FEES.—The corporation not for profit
115 must receive administrative fees, including salaries and
116 benefits, of up to 10 percent of appropriated funds.

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117 (8) RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.-The department shall adopt rules
118 pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement this section.

119 Section 2. For the 2016-2017 fiscal year, and each fiscal
120 year thereafter, the sum of \$300,000 in recurring funds is
121 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of
122 Law Enforcement for the purpose of implementing the Care for
123 Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.

124 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.