

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to veterinary care for retired
 3 military working dogs; creating s. 295.055, F.S.;
 4 providing definitions; creating the Veterinary Care
 5 for Retired Military Working Dogs Program within the
 6 Department of Veterans' Affairs; requiring the
 7 department to contract with a corporation not for
 8 profit to administer the program; providing selection
 9 criteria; providing for disbursement of program funds;
 10 providing for payment and use of administrative fees;
 11 requiring the department to adopt rules; providing an
 12 appropriation; providing an effective date.

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

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 16 Section 1. Section 295.055, Florida Statutes, is created
 17 to read:

18 295.055 Veterinary care for retired military working
 19 dogs.-

20 (1) DEFINITIONS.-As used in this section, the term:

21 (a) "Department" means the Department of Veterans'
 22 Affairs.

23 (b) "Retired military working dog" means a dog that was:

24 1. Procured and trained by the United States Air Force
 25 341st Training Squadron to perform specialized mission functions

26 for the United States Department of Defense and other federal
 27 government agencies;

28 2. Deployed for and actively participated in ground or
 29 surface combat or combat-related conditions on behalf of any
 30 branch of the United States Armed Forces; and

31 3. Adopted pursuant to 10 U.S.C. s. 2583.

32 (c) "Veterinarian" has the same meaning as provided in s.
 33 474.202.

34 (d) "Veterinary care" means the practice of veterinary
 35 medicine as defined in s. 474.202 by a veterinarian and
 36 includes:

37 1. Annual wellness examinations.

38 2. Vaccinations.

39 3. Internal and external parasite prevention treatments.

40 4. Testing for and treatment of illnesses and diseases.

41 5. Medications.

42 6. Emergency care and surgeries.

43 7. Specialty care, such as veterinary oncology.

44 8. Euthanasia.

45 9. Cremation.

46 (2) PROGRAM CREATION.—The Veterinary Care for Retired
 47 Military Working Dogs Program is created within the department
 48 to provide a stable funding source for veterinary care provided
 49 to retired military working dogs.

50 (3) ADMINISTRATION.—The department shall contract with a

51 corporation not for profit organized under chapter 617 to
52 administer and manage the Veterinary Care for Retired Military
53 Working Dogs Program. Notwithstanding chapter 287, the
54 department shall select the corporation not for profit through a
55 competitive grant award process. The corporation not for profit
56 must:

57 (a) Be dedicated to the protection or care of retired
58 military working dogs.

59 (b) Be exempt from taxation under s. 501(a) of the
60 Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in s.
61 501(c) (3) of that code and have maintained such tax-exempt
62 status for at least 5 years.

63 (c) Agree to be subject to review and audit at the
64 discretion of the Auditor General in order to ensure accurate
65 accounting and disbursement of state funds.

66 (d) Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently
67 disseminate information and to assist adopters of retired
68 military working dogs in complying with this section.

69 (4) FUNDING.—

70 (a) The corporation not for profit shall be the disbursing
71 authority for funds appropriated by the Legislature to the
72 department for the Veterinary Care for Retired Military Working
73 Dogs Program. These funds shall be disbursed to the adopter of a
74 retired military working dog to reimburse him or her for the
75 cost of veterinary care provided to the dog upon receipt of:

76 1. Valid documentation from the branch of the United
77 States Armed Forces from which the dog retired which verifies
78 the dog's service; and

79 2. A valid invoice from a veterinarian for veterinary care
80 provided in this state to a retired military working dog and
81 documentation establishing payment of the invoice by the adopter
82 of the dog.

83 (b) Disbursements to an adopter of a retired military
84 working dog may not exceed \$10,000 per dog over the dog's
85 lifetime.

86 (c) An adopter of a retired military working dog who seeks
87 reimbursement for veterinary care may not receive reimbursement
88 if funds appropriated for the Veterinary Care for Retired
89 Military Working Dogs Program are depleted in the year in which
90 the reimbursement is sought.

91 (5) ADMINISTRATIVE FEES.—The department shall pay to the
92 corporation not for profit, and the corporation not for profit
93 may use, up to 10 percent of appropriated funds for its
94 administrative expenses, including salaries and benefits.

95 (6) RULEMAKING.—The department shall adopt rules to
96 implement this section.

97 Section 2. For the 2018-2019 fiscal year and each fiscal
98 year thereafter, the sum of \$300,000 in recurring funds is
99 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of
100 Veterans' Affairs for the purpose of implementing and

HB 1253

2018

101 | administering the Veterinary Care for Retired Military Working
102 | Dogs Program.

103 | Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.