

By Senator Powell

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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; providing legislative findings; defining terms;
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; requiring the
18 department to pay to the corporation not for profit,
19 and authorizing the corporation not for profit to use,
20 up to a certain percentage of appropriated funds for
21 administrative purposes; requiring the department to
22 adopt rules; providing an appropriation; providing an
23 effective date.

24
25 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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27 Section 1. Section 943.69, Florida Statutes, is created to
28 read:

29 943.69 Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.—

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30 (1) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the “Care for
31 Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program Act.”

32 (2) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—The Legislature finds that:

33 (a) Law enforcement dogs have become an integral part of
34 many law enforcement efforts statewide, including the
35 apprehension of suspects through tracking and searching,
36 evidence location, drug and bomb detection, and search and
37 rescue operations;

38 (b) Law enforcement agencies agree that the use of law
39 enforcement dogs is an extremely cost-effective means of crime
40 control and that these dogs possess skills and abilities that
41 frequently exceed those of existing technology;

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

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

47 (3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

48 (a) “Law enforcement agency” means a lawfully established
49 state or local public agency having primary responsibility for
50 the prevention and detection of crime or the enforcement of the
51 penal, traffic, highway, regulatory, game, immigration, postal,
52 customs, or controlled substance laws.

53 (b) “Retired law enforcement dog” means a dog that was
54 previously in the service of or employed by a law enforcement
55 agency in this state for the principal purpose of aiding in the
56 detection of criminal activity, enforcement of laws, or
57 apprehension of offenders and that received certification in
58 obedience and apprehension work from a certifying organization

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59 such as the National Police Canine Association, Inc., or other
60 certifying organization.

61 (c) "Veterinarian" has the same meaning as provided in s.
62 474.202.

63 (d) "Veterinary care" means the practice of veterinary
64 medicine as defined in s. 474.202 by a veterinarian. The term
65 includes annual wellness examinations, vaccinations, internal
66 and external parasite prevention treatments, testing and
67 treatment of illnesses and diseases, medications, emergency care
68 and surgeries, specialty care such as veterinary oncology,
69 euthanasia, and cremation.

70 (4) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Care for Retired Law
71 Enforcement Dogs Program is created within the department to
72 provide a stable funding source for veterinary care that is
73 provided to these dogs.

74 (5) ADMINISTRATION.—The department shall contract with a
75 corporation not for profit organized under chapter 617 to
76 administer and manage the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs
77 Program. Notwithstanding chapter 287, the department shall
78 select the corporation not for profit through a competitive
79 grant award process. The corporation not for profit must meet
80 all of the following criteria:

81 (a) Be dedicated to the protection or care of retired law
82 enforcement dogs.

83 (b) Be exempt from taxation under s. 501(a) of the Internal
84 Revenue Code as an organization described in s. 501(c)(3) of
85 that code.

86 (c) Have maintained such tax-exempt status for at least 5
87 years.

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88 (d) Agree to be subject to review and audit at the
89 discretion of the Auditor General in order to ensure accurate
90 accounting and disbursement of state funds.

91 (e) Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently
92 disseminate information and to assist former handlers and
93 adopters of retired law enforcement dogs in complying with this
94 section.

95 (6) FUNDING.—

96 (a) The corporation not for profit shall be the disbursing
97 authority for funds appropriated by the Legislature to the
98 department for the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs
99 Program. These funds shall be disbursed to the former handler or
100 adopter of a retired law enforcement dog upon receipt of:

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

104 2. A valid invoice from a veterinarian for veterinary care
105 provided in this state to a retired law enforcement dog and
106 documentation establishing payment of the invoice by the former
107 handler or adopter of a retired law enforcement dog.

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

114 (c) A former handler or adopter of a retired law
115 enforcement dog who seeks reimbursement for veterinary care may
116 not receive reimbursement if funds appropriated for the Care for

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117 Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program are depleted in the year
118 for which the reimbursement is sought.

119 (7) ADMINISTRATIVE FEES.—The department shall pay to the
120 corporation not for profit, and the corporation not for profit
121 may use, up to 10 percent of appropriated funds for its
122 administrative expenses, including salaries and benefits.

123 (8) RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.—The department shall adopt rules
124 pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement this section.

125 Section 2. For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, and each fiscal
126 year thereafter, the sum of \$300,000 in recurring funds is
127 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of
128 Law Enforcement for the purpose of implementing and
129 administering the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.

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