

By Senator Powell

30-01052-19

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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
16 accumulating unused funds from a current year for use
17 in a future year; prohibiting a former handler or
18 adopter from receiving reimbursement if funds are
19 depleted for the year for which such reimbursement is
20 sought; requiring the department to pay to the
21 corporation not for profit, and authorizing the
22 corporation not for profit to use, up to a certain
23 percentage of appropriated funds for administrative
24 purposes; requiring the department to adopt rules;
25 providing an appropriation; providing an effective
26 date.

27
28 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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30 Section 1. Section 943.69, Florida Statutes, is created to
31 read:

32 943.69 Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

56 (b) “Retired law enforcement dog” means a dog that was
57 previously in the service of or employed by a law enforcement
58 agency in this state for the principal purpose of aiding in the

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59 detection of criminal activity, enforcement of laws, or
60 apprehension of offenders and that received certification in
61 obedience and apprehension work from a certifying organization
62 such as the National Police Canine Association, Inc., or other
63 certifying organization.

64 (c) "Veterinarian" has the same meaning as provided in s.
65 474.202.

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

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

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

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

86 (b) Be exempt from taxation under s. 501(a) of the Internal
87 Revenue Code as an organization described in s. 501(c)(3) of

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88 that code.

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

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

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

98 (6) FUNDING.—

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

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

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

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

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117 (c) A former handler or adopter of a retired law
118 enforcement dog who seeks reimbursement for veterinary care may
119 not receive reimbursement if funds appropriated for the Care for
120 Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program are depleted in the year
121 for which the reimbursement is sought.

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

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

128 Section 2. For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, and each fiscal
129 year thereafter, the sum of \$300,000 in recurring funds is
130 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of
131 Law Enforcement for the purpose of implementing and
132 administering the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.

133 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019.