

By Senator Powell

30-00151-20

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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 nonprofit
8 corporation to administer and manage the program;
9 providing requirements for the corporation not for
10 profit; providing requirements for the disbursement of
11 funds for the veterinary care of eligible retired law
12 enforcement dogs; placing an annual cap on the amount
13 of funds available for the care of an eligible retired
14 law enforcement dog; prohibiting a former handler or
15 adopter from accumulating unused funds from a current
16 year for use in a future year; prohibiting a former
17 handler or adopter from receiving reimbursement if
18 funds are depleted for the year for which the
19 reimbursement is sought; requiring the department to
20 pay to the nonprofit corporation, and authorizing the
21 nonprofit corporation to use, up to a certain
22 percentage of appropriated funds for administrative
23 purposes; requiring the department to adopt rules;
24 providing an appropriation; providing an effective
25 date.

26
27 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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29 Section 1. Section 943.69, Florida Statutes, is created to

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30 read:

31 943.69 Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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59 obedience and apprehension work from a certifying organization,
60 such as the National Police Canine Association, Inc., or other
61 certifying organization.

62 (c) "Veterinarian" has the same meaning as provided in s.
63 474.202.

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

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

75 (5) ADMINISTRATION.—The department shall contract with a
76 nonprofit corporation organized under chapter 617 to administer
77 and manage the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.
78 Notwithstanding chapter 287, the department shall select the
79 nonprofit corporation through a competitive grant award process.
80 The nonprofit corporation must meet all of the following
81 criteria:

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

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

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

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88 years.

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

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

96 (6) FUNDING.—

97 (a) The nonprofit corporation shall be the disbursing
98 authority for funds the Legislature appropriates to the
99 department for the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs
100 Program. These funds must be disbursed to the former handler or
101 adopter of a retired law enforcement dog upon receipt of:

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

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

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

115 (c) A former handler or adopter of a retired law
116 enforcement dog who seeks reimbursement for veterinary care may

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117 not receive reimbursement if funds appropriated for the Care for
118 Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program are depleted in the year
119 for which the reimbursement is sought.

120 (7) ADMINISTRATIVE FEES.—The department shall pay to the
121 nonprofit corporation, and the nonprofit corporation may use, up
122 to 10 percent of appropriated funds for its administrative
123 expenses, including salaries and benefits.

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

126 Section 2. For the 2020-2021 fiscal year, and each fiscal
127 year thereafter, the sum of \$300,000 in recurring funds is
128 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of
129 Law Enforcement for the purpose of implementing and
130 administering the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.

131 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.