

By Senator Powell

30-00829-21

20211810\_\_

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       specifying requirements for the nonprofit corporation;  
10      specifying requirements for the disbursement of funds  
11      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      an adopter from accumulating unused funds from a  
16      current year for use in a future year; prohibiting a  
17      former handler or an adopter from receiving  
18      reimbursement if funds are depleted for the year for  
19      which the reimbursement is sought; requiring the  
20      department to pay to the nonprofit corporation, and  
21      authorizing the nonprofit corporation to use, up to a  
22      certain percentage of appropriated funds for  
23      administrative expenses; requiring the department to  
24      adopt rules; providing an appropriation; providing an  
25      effective date.

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

28  
29       Section 1. Section 943.69, Florida Statutes, is created to

30-00829-21

20211810\_\_

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

30-00829-21

20211810\_\_

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 in s. 474.202.

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

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

30-00829-21

20211810\_\_

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

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

114 (c) A former handler or an 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

30-00829-21

20211810\_\_

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

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

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

125 Section 2. For the 2021-2022 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, 2021.