

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal and Civil Justice

BILL: CS/SB 440

INTRODUCER: Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Abruzzo

SUBJECT: Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs

DATE: January 13, 2016

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Cellon</u>	<u>Cannon</u>	<u>CJ</u>	Fav/CS
2.	<u>Clodfelter</u>	<u>Sadberry</u>	<u>ACJ</u>	Favorable
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 440 creates the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program. The program will provide reimbursement for up to \$1,500 of annual veterinary costs associated with caring for a retired law enforcement dog by the former handler or adopter who incurs the costs. The program will be administered and managed by a not-for-profit corporation in a contractual arrangement with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE).

The bill includes an appropriation of \$300,000 in recurring general revenue funds for the purpose of implementing the program.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2016.

II. Present Situation:

Law enforcement dogs have become an integral part of many law enforcement efforts statewide, including suspect apprehension through tracking and searching, evidence location, drug and bomb detection, and search and rescue operations. Law enforcement agencies agree that the use of law enforcement dogs is an extremely cost-effective means for crime control and that these dogs possess skills and abilities that frequently exceed that of existing technology.¹

¹ <http://www.brevardsheriff.com/home/commands-services/operational-services/k-9-unit/> (last visited December 21, 2015); www.softretiredk9fund.com and <http://www.wsvn.com/story/27320793/student-launches-retired-k-9-donation-fund> (last visited November 4, 2015).

Just one example of a law enforcement dog's invaluable service is Koda, who worked with the Leon County Sheriff's Office. K-9 Koda was shot and killed in January 2013 as he attempted to immobilize a subject following a vehicle pursuit. Deputies pursued a vehicle several blocks until the vehicle crashed into a ditch. The subject continued to flee on foot and then opened fire on K-9 Koda and the deputies. Two deputies returned fire and wounded the subject before taking him into custody. It was later determined that the subject was wanted on warrants for attempted first degree murder, aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, and discharging a firearm from a vehicle.²

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill creates the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program (program) within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE or department). The program will provide up to \$1,500 annually to any former handler or adopter of a retired law enforcement dog for reimbursement of veterinary care for the dog if the agency from which the dog retired provides verification of the dog's service. The former handler or adopter must submit a valid invoice from a veterinarian for care provided in Florida and proof of payment for reimbursement to occur. When the annual funding for the program is depleted, reimbursements must be discontinued for the remainder of the year.

"Retired law enforcement dog" is defined by the bill as a dog that has received certification in obedience and apprehension work from a certifying organization, such as the National Police Canine Association.³ The dog must have been in the service of or employed by a law enforcement agency in this state for the purpose of aiding in the detection of criminal activity, enforcement of laws, or apprehension of offenders.

The bill defines "law enforcement agency" as a state or local public agency that has primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of crime or the enforcement of the penal, traffic, highway, regulatory, game, immigration, postal, customs, or controlled substance laws.

The bill adopts the term "veterinarian" from s. 474.202, F.S. Subsection (11) of s. 474.202, F.S., defines "veterinarian" as a health care practitioner who is licensed to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine in Florida under the authority of ch. 474, F.S.⁴ The bill defines "veterinary care" as the practice of veterinary medicine as defined in s. 474.202, F.S., by a veterinarian. The definition of "veterinary care" includes:

- Annual wellness examinations,

² Read more: <http://www.odmp.org/k9/1497-k9-koda#ixzz2vrveuHYu>

³ www.npca.net (last visited November 4, 2015). The National Police Canine Association is one of many such organizations in the country, including The Florida Law Enforcement Canine Association (FLECA) which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the training and certification of Florida's Law Enforcement Canine Teams according to the website, <http://www.flecak9.com/>. Additionally, the department provides a 400 hour K-9 Team training course and proficiency exam.

⁴ Section 474.202(9), F.S., defines "practice of veterinary medicine" to mean "diagnosing the medical condition of animals and prescribing, dispensing, or administering drugs, medicine, appliances, applications, or treatment of whatever nature for the prevention, cure, or relief of a wound, fracture, bodily injury, or disease thereof; performing any manual procedure for the diagnosis of or treatment for pregnancy or fertility or infertility of animals; or representing oneself by the use of titles or words, or undertaking, offering, or holding oneself out, as performing any of these functions. The term includes the determination of the health, fitness, or soundness of an animal.

- Vaccines,
- Internal and external parasite prevention treatments,
- Testing and treatment of illnesses and diseases,
- Medications,
- Emergency care and surgeries,
- Care provided in specialties of veterinary medicine such as veterinary oncology, and
- Euthanasia and cremation services.

The department is directed to contract with a corporation not-for-profit, organized under ch. 617, F.S., to administer and manage the program.⁵ The corporation will be selected through a competitive grant award process. The corporation must:

- Be dedicated to the protection and care of retired law enforcement dogs.
- Hold tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue code as a s. 501(c)(3) organization.⁶
- Have held tax-exempt status for at least five years.
- Agree to be subject to review and audit at the discretion of the Auditor General to ensure accurate accounting and disbursement of state funds.
- Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently disseminate information and assist former handlers and adopters of retired law enforcement dogs in complying with the bill.
- Receive administrative fees, including salaries and benefits, not to exceed 10 percent of appropriated funds.

The bill contains legislative findings related to the value of law enforcement dogs to the residents of Florida.

The department is given rulemaking authority to implement the provisions in the bill.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2016.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

⁵ Section 617.01401(5), F.S., defines “corporation not for profit” to be a corporation no part of the income or profit of which is distributable to its members, directors, or officers, except as otherwise provided under this chapter.

⁶ See 26 U.S.C.A. s. 501(c)(3).

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

To the extent that the retired K-9's former handler or adopter is reimbursed for the dog's on-going veterinary care, CS/SB 440 will have a positive financial impact for those persons.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill includes an appropriation of \$300,000 in recurring general revenue funds for the purpose of implementing the program. The program will be administered and managed by a not-for-profit corporation in a contractual arrangement with the FDLE.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates section 943.69 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Criminal Justice on November 17, 2015:

- Contains a new definition of “veterinary care.”
- Requires that the retired law enforcement dog's former handler or adopter must show proof of payment of the veterinary services for which he or she seeks reimbursement.
- Specifies that the selection process for the corporation not-for-profit to administer the program will be accomplished through a competitive grant award process.

B. Amendments:

None.