

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.

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

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

943.69 Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(a) "Law enforcement agency" means a lawfully established state or local public agency having primary responsibility for 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  
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  
 84 | Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in s.  
 85 | 501(c)(3) of that code.

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

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  
102 from which the dog retired which verifies that the dog was in  
103 the 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  
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

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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.