

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to care for retired law enforcement dogs; providing a short title; providing definitions; creating the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program within the Department of Law Enforcement; requiring the department to contract with a corporation not for profit to administer the program and providing criteria therefor; providing specific procedures for how funds will be disbursed for the veterinary care of eligible retired law enforcement dogs; limiting the amount of funds available for any eligible retired law enforcement dog in any one year; providing for the deposit of program funds; providing for the reversion of funds to the department under certain circumstances; providing for the carryforward of unexpended appropriations for use in the program up to certain limits; providing an annual appropriation; providing an effective date.

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

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

(2) 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

27 the prevention and detection of crime or the enforcement of the
 28 penal, traffic, highway, regulatory, game, immigration, postal,
 29 customs, or controlled substance laws.

30 (b) "Retired law enforcement dog" means any dog that was
 31 in the service of or employed by a law enforcement agency in
 32 this state for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection
 33 of criminal activity, enforcement of laws, or apprehension of
 34 offenders but that no longer serves in the capacity of a law
 35 enforcement dog. The retired law enforcement dog must have
 36 received certification in obedience and apprehension work from a
 37 certifying organization such as the National Police Canine
 38 Association or other certifying organization.

39 (c) "Veterinarian" has the same meaning as provided in s.
 40 474.202, Florida Statutes.

41 (d) "Veterinary care" means any veterinary medical service
 42 described in s. 474.202(9) or s. 474.202(13), Florida Statutes.
 43 The term includes annual wellness examinations, vaccines,
 44 internal and external parasite prevention treatments, testing
 45 and treatment of illnesses and diseases, medications, emergency
 46 care and surgeries, specialties of veterinary medicine such as
 47 veterinary oncology, and euthanasia, if each of the services is
 48 provided by a veterinarian. The term also includes cremation.

49 (3) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—

50 (a) In recent years, law enforcement dogs have become an
 51 integral part of many law enforcement efforts statewide,
 52 including suspect apprehension through tracking and searching,

53 evidence location, drug and bomb detection, and search and
54 rescue operations. Law enforcement agencies agree that the use
55 of law enforcement dogs is an extremely cost-effective means for
56 crime control and that these dogs possess skills and abilities
57 that frequently exceed that of existing technology.

58 (b) Recognizing that the work of law enforcement dogs is
59 often dangerous and can cause these dogs to incur injuries at a
60 rate higher than the rate of injuries that occurs with
61 nonworking dogs, and recognizing the significant contributions
62 that law enforcement dogs provide to the residents of this
63 state, the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program is
64 created within the Department of Law Enforcement to provide a
65 stable funding source for former handlers and adopters of
66 retired law enforcement dogs to provide veterinary care for
67 these dogs.

68 (4) ADMINISTRATION.—The Department of Law Enforcement
69 shall contract with a corporation not for profit organized under
70 chapter 617, Florida Statutes, to administer and manage the Care
71 for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program. Notwithstanding the
72 competitive sealed bid procedures required under chapter 287,
73 Florida Statutes, the department shall enter into a contract
74 with a corporation that:

75 (a) Is dedicated to the protection or care of retired law
76 enforcement dogs.

77 (b) Holds exempt status under s. 501(a) of the Internal
78 Revenue Code as an organization described in s. 501(c)(3) of the

79 Internal Revenue Code.

80 (c) Has held its exempt status for at least 5 years.

81 (d) Agrees to be subject to review and audit at the
 82 discretion of the Auditor General to ensure accurate accounting
 83 and disbursement of state funds.

84 (e) Demonstrates the ability to effectively and
 85 efficiently disseminate information and assist former handlers
 86 and adopters of retired law enforcement dogs in understanding
 87 the provisions of this section.

88 (f) Receives administrative fees, including salaries and
 89 benefits, not to exceed 10 percent of appropriated funds.

90 (5) FUNDING.—

91 (a) The corporation shall be the disbursing authority for
 92 funds appropriated by the Legislature to the Department of Law
 93 Enforcement for the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs
 94 Program. These funds shall be disbursed upon receipt of a valid
 95 invoice, submitted by the former handler or adopter of a retired
 96 law enforcement dog, from a veterinarian for veterinary care
 97 provided in the state to a retired law enforcement dog.

98 (b) Annual disbursements to any former handler or adopter
 99 of a retired law enforcement dog are limited to \$1,500 per
 100 retired law enforcement dog. A former handler or adopter of a
 101 retired law enforcement dog may not accumulate unused funds from
 102 one year for use in a future year.

103 (c) A former handler or adopter of a retired law
 104 enforcement dog who seeks reimbursement for veterinary services

105 shall not receive reimbursement if funds for the Care for
106 Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program are depleted in the year
107 for which the reimbursement is sought.

108 (d) Funds appropriated for the Care for Retired Law
109 Enforcement Dogs Program shall be held in the Operating Trust
110 Fund of the Department of Law Enforcement in a separate
111 depository account in the name of the corporation and subject to
112 the provisions of the contract with the department. The contract
113 must provide that any funds held in the separate depository
114 account in the name of the corporation must revert to the
115 department if the contract expires or is terminated.

116 Notwithstanding s. 216.301, Florida Statutes, and pursuant to s.
117 216.351, Florida Statutes, the Executive Office of the Governor
118 shall, on July 1 of each year, certify forward all unexpended
119 funds appropriated pursuant to this section. However, in no
120 event shall the fund balance for the Care for Retired Law
121 Enforcement Dogs Program exceed \$400,000.

122 Section 2. Beginning in the 2014-2015 fiscal year and each
123 year thereafter, the sum of \$300,000 in recurring funds is
124 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of
125 Law Enforcement for the purpose of implementing the Care for
126 Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program as created by this act.

127 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014.