

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 2023

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HOUSE BILL 1042

Committee Substitute Favorable 5/23/24

Short Title: Vet Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

May 7, 2024

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

2 AN ACT TO REIMBURSE THE VETERINARY CARE OF RETIRED LAW
3 ENFORCEMENT CANINES.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 143 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
6 Article to read:

7 "Article 12I.

8 "Retired Law Enforcement Canine Veterinary Care Reimbursements.

9 "**§ 143-166.90. Purpose.**

10 In consideration of hazardous public service rendered to the people of this State, there is
11 provided a system of veterinary care reimbursement for retired law enforcement canines.

12 "**§ 143-166.91. Definitions.**

13 The following definitions apply in this Article:

14 (1) Correctional agency. – A lawfully established State or local public agency
15 having primary responsibility for the supervision, protection, care, custody,
16 control, or investigation of individuals at a State prison or local confinement
17 facility within the State.

18 (2) Law enforcement agency. – A lawfully established State or local public
19 agency within the State having primary responsibility for the prevention and
20 detection of crime or the enforcement of penal, traffic, highway, regulatory,
21 game, immigration, postal, customs, or controlled substance laws.

22 (3) Retired law enforcement canine. – A canine meeting the following criteria:

23 a. The canine retired on or after July 1, 2024, and prior to retirement was
24 in the service of or owned by a law enforcement agency or a
25 correctional agency for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection
26 of criminal activity, the enforcement of laws, the apprehension of
27 offenders, the detection of explosives or narcotics, or search and
28 rescue operations.

29 b. The canine received certification in obedience, apprehension,
30 explosives detection, narcotics detection, or search and rescue work
31 from a nationally recognized organization that certifies canines
32 performing that type of work.

33 (4) Veterinary care. – The practice, by a veterinarian, of veterinary medicine as
34 defined in G.S. 90-181. For purposes of this Article, this term includes, at a
35 minimum, each of the following:

36 a. Annual wellness examinations.



- 1 **b.** Vaccinations.
- 2 **c.** Internal and external parasite prevention treatments.
- 3 **d.** Testing and treatment of illnesses and diseases.
- 4 **e.** Medications.
- 5 **f.** Emergency care and surgeries.
- 6 **g.** Veterinary oncology or other specialty care.
- 7 **h.** Euthanasia.
- 8 **i.** Cremation.
- 9 Veterinary care shall not include elective surgery.

10 **"§ 143-166.92. Application for reimbursement.**

11 (a) When a retired law enforcement canine receives veterinary care, the owner of the
12 canine may apply to the Department of Public Safety pursuant to the provisions of this Article
13 for the reimbursement of that care up to the amount of one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500)
14 in a State fiscal year.

15 (b) When seeking reimbursement in accordance with the provisions of this Article, the
16 owner of the retired law enforcement canine must submit an application for reimbursement
17 within 90 days of the date of the veterinary care received by the retired law enforcement canine.

18 **"§ 143-166.93. Creation of Fund; management.**

19 There is established within the Department of Public Safety the Retired Law Enforcement
20 Canine Fund. All monies in the Fund shall not revert. Awards from the Fund shall be distributed
21 in accordance with this Article.

22 The Department of Public Safety shall have the power to make necessary rules and
23 regulations for the administration of the provisions of this Article and shall have the authority to
24 use up to one percent (1%) of monies received by the Retired Law Enforcement Canine Fund for
25 the purpose of administering the Fund. The Department of Public Safety shall be vested with the
26 power to make all determinations necessary for the administration of this Article and all of its
27 decisions and determinations shall be final and conclusive and not subject to review or reversal
28 except by the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety or the Secretary's designee.

29 **"§ 143-166.94. Record keeping.**

30 In relation to applications received under this Article, the Department of Public Safety shall
31 keep a record of the following:

- 32 **(1)** All applications received.
- 33 **(2)** All application determinations.
- 34 **(3)** All funds disbursed.

35 **"§ 143-166.95. Other benefits not affected; elective participation.**

36 (a) No other benefits now provided for retired law enforcement canines shall be affected
37 by the provisions of this Article, and the benefits provided for in this Article shall not be
38 diminished, abated, or otherwise affected by the provision of benefits to retired law enforcement
39 canines under any other provision of law.

40 (b) Owners of retired law enforcement canines are not required to seek reimbursement
41 for veterinary care under this Article and the failure to seek that reimbursement in a given year
42 shall not preclude an owner from seeking future reimbursement under this Article."

43 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 17F-21 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

44 "(c) The terms and conditions outlined in the transfer of ownership of a service dog, as
45 referenced in subsection (a) of this section, shall not prevent the owner of a retired law
46 enforcement canine from applying for reimbursement of veterinary care for a retired law
47 enforcement canine in accordance with Article 12I of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes."

48 **SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Retired Law
49 Enforcement Canine Fund the sum of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) in recurring
50 funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to be used in accordance with the provisions of Article 12I
51 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes, as enacted by this act.

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SECTION 4. This act becomes effective July 1, 2024.