

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8571

To require the Attorney General to establish a grant program to assist with the medical expenses of qualified working dogs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 24, 2024

Mr. JAMES (for himself and Ms. WILD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, and Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To require the Attorney General to establish a grant program to assist with the medical expenses of qualified working dogs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Protecting America’s
5 Working Dogs Act of 2024”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The Department of Defense utilizes ap-
2 proximately 1,600 military working dogs to protect
3 our nation and keep United States military per-
4 sonnel out of harm's way.

5 (2) Military working dogs have played an inte-
6 gral role in the success of numerous operations and
7 missions, including the raids which resulted in the
8 deaths of Osama bin Laden, the founder of al-
9 Qaeda, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of
10 ISIS.

11 (3) Working dogs play a critical role in assist-
12 ing our Armed Forces and Federal and local law en-
13 forcement in protecting Americans and defending
14 freedom at home and abroad.

15 (4) Within the Federal Government, working
16 dogs assist the U.S. Capitol Police, the Bureau of
17 Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the
18 Transportation Security Administration, the Depart-
19 ment of Defense, U.S. Customs and Border Protec-
20 tion, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation,
21 amongst other Federal departments and agencies.

22 (5) Almost all working dogs work in tandem
23 with our Armed Forces and law enforcement officers
24 until they are no longer medically able, at which
25 point they are medically separated.

1 (6) The future of retired working dogs with re-
2 spect to ownership and provision of medical services
3 is often unclear after the working dog is retired.

4 (7) The medical treatment required by many
5 former working dogs is significant enough that it
6 creates a hardship for the individuals, often former
7 partners, who take in these canine heroes and be-
8 come responsible for their medical costs.

9 **SEC. 3. GRANT PROGRAM TO FUND COVERED MEDICAL EX-**
10 **PENSES FOR QUALIFIED WORKING DOGS.**

11 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 fiscal year
12 after the date of enactment of this Act, and each fiscal
13 year thereafter for 4 fiscal years, the Attorney General
14 shall carry out a program under which the Attorney Gen-
15 eral may award grants, each in amounts not to exceed
16 \$575,000, to eligible nonprofit organizations to assist with
17 the covered medical expenses of qualified working dogs.

18 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—A nonprofit organization is eligi-
19 ble to receive a grant under this section if the organiza-
20 tion—

21 (1) primarily exists to care for qualified work-
22 ing dogs;

23 (2) provides medically related financial assist-
24 ance to owners of qualified working dogs;

1 (3) allocates not less than 70 percent of its
2 spending towards program expenses directly related
3 to assisting with the covered medical expenses of
4 qualified working dogs; and

5 (4) separately states the veterinary expenses of
6 such organization on the Internal Revenue Service
7 Form 990 filed by such organization with the Inter-
8 nal Revenue Service.

9 (c) APPLICATION.—To receive a grant under this sec-
10 tion, a nonprofit organization shall submit to the Attorney
11 General an application at such time, in such manner, and
12 containing such information as the Attorney General may
13 require, including information that demonstrates that the
14 nonprofit organization meets the eligibility requirements
15 under subsection (b).

16 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—A recipient of a grant under
17 this section shall use such grant to pay for covered medical
18 expenses of qualified working dogs.

19 (e) GRANT AMOUNT REDUCTION.—A grant amount
20 awarded to an eligible nonprofit organization for a fiscal
21 year pursuant to this section shall be reduced by an
22 amount equal to the total amount of unexpended grant
23 funds awarded under this section in previous fiscal years.

24 (f) REPORT.—The Attorney General shall submit to
25 Congress a report that details—

1 (1) the number of qualified working dogs as-
2 sisted pursuant to a grant awarded under this sec-
3 tion; and

4 (2) the average medical expenses for each quali-
5 fied working dog assisted pursuant to a grant
6 awarded under this section.

7 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act—

8 (1) the term “covered medical expenses” means
9 any expenses related to medical treatment and care
10 of qualified working dogs, including veterinarian of-
11 fice visits, medical procedures, diagnostic tests, and
12 medications or medically necessary supplements;

13 (2) the term “qualified working dog” means—

14 (A) a retired dog that worked for the Fed-
15 eral Government, including the Armed Forces,
16 to carry out military, security, or law enforce-
17 ment activity; and

18 (B) a service dog that works for an indi-
19 vidual who is a veteran or a retired Federal law
20 enforcement officer; and

21 (3) the term “veteran” has the meaning given
22 the term in section 101 of title 38, United States
23 Code.

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