

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023

H.B. 1042  
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH10559-NDa-179A

Short Title: Vet Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Gillespie.

Referred to:

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 each of the following  
23 criteria:  
24 a. It was previously in the service of or employed by a law enforcement  
25 agency or a correctional agency for the principal purpose of aiding in  
26 the detection of criminal activity, the enforcement of laws, the  
27 apprehension of offenders, and search and rescue operations.  
28 b. It served or was employed by one or more law enforcement agencies  
29 or correctional agencies in the manner described in sub-subdivision a.  
30 of this subdivision and it received certification in obedience,  
31 apprehension, or search and rescue work from a national organization  
32 that certifies canines perming 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.



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- b. Vaccinations.
- c. Internal and external parasite prevention treatments.
- d. Testing and treatment of illnesses and diseases.
- e. Medications.
- f. Emergency care and surgeries.
- g. Veterinary oncology or other specialty care.
- h. Euthanasia.
- i. Cremation.

Veterinary care shall not include elective surgery.

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

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

(b) The veterinary care for which the owner of the retired law enforcement canine applies for reimbursement under this Article must be for veterinary care occurring in the calendar year during which the application for the reimbursement is submitted.

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

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

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

**"§ 143-166.94. Record Keeping.**

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

- (1) All applications received.
- (2) All application determinations.
- (3) All funds disbursed.

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

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

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

**SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Retired Law Enforcement Canine Fund the sum of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) in recurring funds for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to be used in accordance with the provisions of Article 121 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes, as enacted by this act.

**SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2024, and applies to retired law enforcement canines retiring on or after that date.