



HOUSE BILL 300: Vet Care for Retired First Responder Dogs.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	House Homeland Security and Military and Veterans Affairs. If favorable, re-refer to Appropriations. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	April 1, 2025
Introduced by:	Reps. Gillespie, Pyrtle, Miller, Carson Smith	Prepared by:	Karyl Smith
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition H300-CSCJa-5		Committee Co-Counsel

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 300 would do the following:*

- *Create new Article 12I in Chapter 143 of the General Statutes to provide a system of veterinary care reimbursement for retired first responder canines.*
- *Appropriate \$400,000 to establish the Retired First Responder Canine Fund.*

The PCS makes a technical change.

CURRENT LAW: G.S. 17F-21 allows for the disposition of retired service animals. The statute provides that upon a determination that any service animal is no longer fit or needed for public service, the State or unit of local government may transfer ownership of the animal at a price determined by the State or unit of local government and upon any other terms and conditions deemed appropriate. The individual to whom the service animal is transferred must agree to accept ownership, care, and custody of the service animal. G.S. 17F-21(b)(1) defines a "service animal" to include "any horse, dog, or other animal owned by the State or a unit of local government that performs law enforcement, public safety, or emergency service functions.

BILL ANALYSIS:

Section 1 would do the following:

- Define various terms.
- Set out the requirements to register a retired first responder canine with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the requirements to register a retired first responder canine owner with DPS.
- Describe the application process for reimbursement of veterinary care for retired first responder canines.
- Establish the Retired First Responder Canine Fund (Fund) within DPS and empower DPS to administer the Fund.
- Require DPS to keep records of all applications received, all application determinations, and all funds disbursed from the Fund.
- Provide that the contact information of registered owners of retired first responder canines are not a public record.

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- Clarify that other benefits provided for retired first responder canines will not be impacted by the new Article and owners of the canines are not required to seek reimbursement for veterinary care.

Section 2 would provide that the terms and conditions outlined in the transfer of ownership of a service dog in accordance with the current law does not prevent the owner of a retired first responder canine from applying for reimbursement of veterinary care under new Article 12I.

Section 3 would exempt DPS from certain rule making requirements when administering the Fund.

Section 4 would exempt DPS from certain contested case provisions when making decisions necessary to administer the Fund.

Section 5 would clarify that a first responder unit may register a first responder canine that retired on or after July 1, 2024, with DPS.

Section 6 would appropriate \$400,000 in recurring funds for the 2025-2026 fiscal year from the General Fund to the Retired First Responder Canine Fund to be used in accordance with the provisions of new Article 12I.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The bill would become effective 45 days after it becomes law.

Theresa Matula, Legislative Analysis Division, contributed substantially to this summary.