



National Police Association  
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**TESTIMONY ENCOURAGING THE PASSAGE OF LD 1234: An act that would require the Department of Public Safety to pay for the healthcare expenses of a retired dog previously used in the service of the State Police. The department would reimburse the authorized handler of the retired law enforcement dog for medical expenses of up to \$5,000 per calendar year upon submission of receipts for such expenses. Testimony to Maine’s Joint Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety April 20, 2023**

Retired police dogs, also known as K-9s, have served as valuable assets to law enforcement agencies. These highly-trained animals have helped to protect and serve in most cases for many years. However, once these dogs retire, they may face significant healthcare expenses that can be a burden for their handlers or adoptive families. Given their service to the community, it is only fair that retired police dogs receive care commensurate with their service. Therefore, the National Police Association supports Maine LD 1234 in providing reimbursement for their health care expenses.

Police dogs face many risks during their work. They are often exposed to dangerous situations that can cause physical harm or even death. For example, police dogs may be exposed to toxic chemicals, hazardous materials, and weapons. They may also be subjected to physical attacks from suspects or other animals. Additionally, police dogs may be injured while apprehending suspects or during training exercises.

Currently, there is no federal law mandating that retired police dogs receive health care benefits. The decision to provide health care for retired police dogs is left up to individual states or law enforcement agencies. Some states have implemented programs to provide health care benefits for retired police dogs, while others have not.

There are several benefits to providing reimbursement for the health care expenses of retired police dogs. First and foremost, these dogs have served their communities and deserve to be cared for in their retirement years. Providing reimbursement for health care expenses demonstrates appreciation for their service and dedication.

Secondly, providing reimbursement for health care expenses can help to alleviate the financial burden that handlers or adoptive families may face. These individuals may not have the financial resources to provide the necessary medical care for their retired police dog, and providing reimbursement can help to ensure that these dogs receive the care they need.

The cost of veterinary expenses is rising. The fear of having to rehome retired Police dogs due to veterinary costs is stressful in an already stressful job. Unfortunately, rehoming has happened creating additional stress for both K-9s and K-9 handlers.

Some states have already implemented programs to provide reimbursement for the health care expenses of retired police dogs. These programs vary in their scope and eligibility requirements.

For example, Florida provides handlers of retired police dogs up to \$1,500 in reimbursements for annual veterinary costs. The program is available to retired police dogs that have served with a law enforcement agency for at five years or that had to retire due to injury after at least three years.

In Michigan, the Public Safety Officer Benefit Act provides for the medical care of retired police dogs that have served with a law enforcement agency in Michigan. The law provides for up to \$2,500 per year for the medical care of retired police dogs.

Retired police dogs have served our communities with distinction and should be cared for in their retirement years. State governments should provide reimbursement for health care expenses of retired state police law enforcement dogs. These programs not only show appreciation for the service of these dogs, but they also help to ensure that they receive the care they need in their retirement years.