

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-123

AN ACT INCREASING THE PENALTY FOR THE INTENTIONAL INJURY OF A POLICE ANIMAL OR DOG IN A VOLUNTEER CANINE SEARCH AND RESCUE

Title: TEAM.

Vote Date: 3/4/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/11/2021

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Safety and Security Committee

Co-sponsors: Sen. Eric C. Berthel, 32nd Dist.

Rep. Nicole Klarides-Ditria, 105th Dist.

Rep. Ben McGorty, 122nd Dist.

Rep. Bill Buckbee, 67th Dist.

Rep. Michael DiGiovancarlo, 74th Dist.

Rep. Jill Barry, 31st Dist.

Rep. Greg S. Howard, 43rd Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill will further protect police dogs, as well as search and rescue dogs in our state. These dogs are valuable assets to the people in the community and the penalty for intentionally causing harm to these animals should be increased. In addition, to the important job they perform the cost of training these dogs can range from \$12,000 to \$20,000.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Senator Eric C. Berthel, State of Connecticut

Senator Berthel supports this bill. These animals assist our law enforcement officers as well as search and rescue teams. The ability of these dogs is beyond their human counterparts as they can detect drugs, firearms and explosives. They can locate missing persons and help apprehend and fleeing suspect for a crime. The search and rescue dogs are also

equally as valuable by locating and rescuing those in distress. They dogs are a valuable resource. The cost in training these dogs is between \$12,000 and \$20,000.

Representative Nicole Klarides-Ditria, State of Connecticut, House of Representatives

Rep. Klarides-Ditria supports this bill. This important proposal would increase the felony class from a D to C for any person who intentionally injures or kills any animal while such dog is performing their duties. This will enforce stricter penalties on the perpetrator resulting in a fine not more than ten thousand dollars or being imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both. This bill will insure our service animals are safer and more valued in the future.

Brian Anderson, Legislative Coordinator, Council 4 AFSCME

Council 4 AFSCME supports this bill. Police dogs are vital partners in law enforcement. All the protection that the law can reasonably give to them should be given to them.

Jeffrey T. Atwood, Bloomfield, CT

Mr. Atwood supports this bill. Mr. Atwood is a supporter of the K9's that are in Bloomfield, CT. This law will keep these hard-working, valuable animals safer.

Kevin A. Dillon, A.A.E, Executive Director, Connecticut Airport Authority

CAA supports this bill. CAA supports the effort to increase the penalties for any individual who intentionally harms police dogs or service animals in the course of their duties.

Stacey Ober, JD, Legislative Analyst and Community Outreach Coordinator, New England AKC Government Relations

Stacey Ober wrote in support of this bill. This bill would deter harm to working dogs by increasing the penalties for the intentional injury or killing of police animals or dogs in volunteer canine search and rescue teams.

Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative, Connecticut State Firefighters Association, Inc.

CT State Firefighters Assoc. supports this bill. These animals are an integral part of search and rescue teams.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Kelly McConney Moore, Interim Senior Policy Counsel, The American Civil Liberties Union of CT

The ACLU opposes this bill. Currently, a person who intentionally injures or kills a police dog is guilty of a class D felony. Class D felonies are punishable by at least one year and at most five years incarceration. While no one wants to see any of these animals killed or injured at the hands of a human increasing the penalty is not the answer. Longer sentences do not have a significant deterrent effect. The ACLU-CT is dedicated to ending mass incarceration. Police dogs in CT are rarely injured in our state.

Reported by: Bonnie Gray, Asst. Clerk

Date: 03/11/2021