



February 25, 2026

RE: House Bill 1396

Dear Co-Chairs Beebe-Center and Hasenfus, and Members of the Joint Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee,

As the advocacy voice of the responsible pet care community, the [Pet Advocacy Network](#) represents the interests and expertise of retailers, companion animal suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, pet owners, and others involved in the many aspects of pet care across the United States. Our association promotes animal well-being and responsible pet ownership, fosters environmental stewardship, and ensures healthy pets' availability through our local, state, and federal work. In addition, we routinely advocate for legislative and regulatory proposals to protect the health, safety, and availability of companion animals.

On behalf of the responsible pet care community, we ask that you vote **YES** on House Bill 1396, which would provide healthcare cost reimbursement for retired law enforcement canines.

Law enforcement canines are indispensable members of our public safety community. They are highly trained officers who serve alongside their human partners in some of the most dangerous and demanding situations imaginable. These canines track missing persons, locate narcotics and explosives, apprehend dangerous suspects, and protect both officers and the public. They run toward danger, enter unknown environments first, and absorb risks that would otherwise fall to their human partners.

A K-9's retirement marks the end of active duty, not the end of the physical toll that duty has taken. Many retired K-9s experience service-related injuries, joint deterioration, and other medical conditions that require ongoing veterinary treatment. Unlike the officers they serve beside, retired K-9s do not receive pensions or guaranteed health benefits. Their handlers or adoptive families assume full financial responsibility for their care.

This legislation is both compassionate and responsible. By establishing the Retired Law Enforcement K-9 Health Care Fund within the Department of Public Safety, Maine would provide up to \$5,000 in lifetime veterinary reimbursement for eligible retired law enforcement canines. This is a modest but meaningful investment that recognizes their service and helps offset the financial burden placed on handlers and adopters.

Importantly, the bill:

- Clearly defines eligibility standards to ensure funds are used appropriately.
- Limits reimbursement to documented veterinary expenses.
- Caps reimbursement at \$5,000 per canine, subject to available appropriations.
- Allows agencies the discretion to provide additional support from their own budgets.
- Permits private donations and grants to supplement public funding.

1025 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20036  
202.452.1525 | [info@petadvocacy.org](mailto:info@petadvocacy.org)  
[Petadvocacy.org](http://Petadvocacy.org)



This framework ensures accountability, flexibility, and fiscal responsibility.

This bill sends a powerful message: Maine values all members of its law enforcement community, including the K-9 officers who serve alongside them. Providing assistance for their medical care is a matter of honoring their sacrifice and ensuring they can live their retirement years with dignity and quality of life.

Other states have recognized the importance of similar programs. Delaware, Florida, and Illinois have enacted similar laws in recent years. Connecticut, Massachusetts, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania all currently have similar legislation under consideration. Maine now has the opportunity to demonstrate leadership and compassion while supporting the dedicated handlers who often adopt their retired partners.

These canines have spent their lives protecting our communities. Supporting this bill is a simple and meaningful way for us to protect them in return. We respectfully urge the committee to vote YES on HB 1396.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Alisa Clements  
Director, Government Affairs

1025 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20036  
202.452.1525 | [info@petadvocacy.org](mailto:info@petadvocacy.org)  
[Petadvocacy.org](http://Petadvocacy.org)

