

Eddie McKay  
Woolwich  
LD 1234

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Regarding: The Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety ; LD 1234- An Act to Provide Reimbursement for Health Care Expenses of Retired State Police Law Enforcement Dogs.

April 17, 2023

Chair Senator Beene-Center, Chair Representative Salisbury, and Esteemed Committee Members,

My name is Eddie McKay, I am a current Maine resident residing in Woolwich. It is with great honor that I write to you in support of LD- 1234 An Act to Provide Reimbursement for Retired State Police Law Enforcement Dogs.

Canine officers work for about seven years, with an average lifespan of 9-13 years. Resulting in at least 54% of their lives dedicated to serving the state of Maine. K-9 teams are available twenty-four hours a day seven days a week, tracking lost persons, searching for discarded evidence, and detecting illegal substances.

Canine officers are trained to defend their handlers and discourage criminals from acting violently. Consequently, it is not feasible for a civilian to adopt a retired canine officer. As a result, the canine officer's human counterpart often adopts the canine preceding retirement. Thus, presenting a possible financial burden. For large dogs in the United States the cost of only routine veterinary visits typically culminates between seven-hundred and one-thousand-five hundred dollars over the course of one year. This cost is much lower than what would be required to take proper care of an older canine, especially one that has worked for numerous years. Canine officers engage in constant physical activity, putting additional pressure on their joints. Surgery to repair a canine's knee joint alone costs thousands of dollars. Under the current Maine state legislature, the canine handler is required to pay the totality of the cost of care. Supporting the canine's retirement does not only help the canine itself, the support also aids our State police officers that work tirelessly to keep the state of Maine safe.

The consideration of this testimony is greatly appreciated as is the work of all Maine State law enforcement officials. I sincerely hope that the committee feels inclined to support these retired officers by allocating five thousand dollars in state funds to aid the cost of their medical treatment and general living expenses. Your consideration of this matter and solution is very much appreciated.