

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORT AND TREATMENT FOR RETIRED POLICE DOGS

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House Bill 4012 as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Mike Hoadley

Committee: Government Operations

Complete to 6-5-25

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4012 would amend a provision of the Public Health Code that allows an ambulance to provide emergency medical transport of a police dog injured in the line of duty to a veterinary clinic for emergency medical treatment, as long as there are no humans needing transport or emergency assistance at the time, to similarly allow transport of a *retired police dog* that needs emergency care.

Retired police dog would mean a dog trained for law enforcement work that was used by a Michigan state or local law enforcement agency until it ceased to work due to age or disease.

Under both current law and the bill, ambulance personnel may require that a police officer accompany the dog during the emergency transport.

MCL 333.20925

BRIEF DISCUSSION:

Police dogs (K9s) are extensively trained to assist officers at crime scenes and perform such specialized tasks as searching for narcotics or tracking suspects or missing persons. They also can provide a point of contact between the police and their community, accompanying officers to visit elementary schools or community events. Their training and work are rigorous, ongoing, and physically taxing. K9s are retired when the wear and tear begin to tell. In the years after their service, they can exhibit service-related health problems and complications.

The bill would extend provisions for K9 emergency transport that currently apply to active-duty police dogs so that they would apply to retired police dogs. Those provisions allow ambulance providers to provide the transport service; they do not require them to do so. The dogs cannot displace a human who needs the service. According to committee testimony, the cost of transport for retired dogs would be borne by the dog's handler.

Supporters of the bill noted that, for both active-duty and retired police dogs that need urgent veterinary care, getting them to a facility quickly—and allowing their handler to tend to them en route instead of doing the driving—can be the difference between good outcomes and adverse ones, including between life and death.

The bill is informally known as Canjo's Law, after a retired police dog that faced issues getting transport to care while in critical condition, and ultimately died while being transported.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 4012 would not have a significant fiscal impact on state expenditures to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or local units of government that may operate ambulance services. There may be costs associated with the use of an ambulance for this service, which could be borne by either the ambulance provider or the insurance held by the retired police dog. Active duty police dogs were made eligible for emergency ambulance services under 2018 PA 600.¹

POSITIONS:

Representatives of K9 Hero Guardians and K9 Canjo testified in support of the bill. (5-1-25)

The following entities indicated support for the bill (5-1-25):

- Michigan Humane Society
- Humane World for Animals

Legislative Analyst: Rick Yuille
Fiscal Analyst: Sydney Brown

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

¹ <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2018-SB-1234>