

CHAPTER 97-61

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 232

An act relating to police and fire animals; providing a short title; amending s. 843.19, F.S.; defining the term "SAR dog"; prohibiting the injuring or killing of an SAR dog under specified circumstances; providing penalties for inflicting bodily harm upon specified animals; providing penalties; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. This act may be cited as the "Aspen Search and Rescue Dog Protection Act" in honor of "Aspen" who is an invaluable search and rescue dog in the state, whose handler actively pursued the protection of all search and rescue dogs through legislation.

Section 2. Section 843.19, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

843.19 Injuring or killing police dog, ~~or~~ fire dog, SAR dog, or police horse prohibited; penalty.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Police dog" means any dog, and "police horse" means any horse, that ~~which~~ is owned, or the service of which is employed, by a law enforcement agency for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection of criminal activity, enforcement of laws, or apprehension of offenders.

(b) "Fire dog" means any dog that ~~which~~ is owned, or the service of which is employed, by a fire department, a special fire district, or the State Fire Marshal, for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection of flammable materials or the investigation of fires.

(c) "SAR dog" means any search and rescue dog that is owned, or the service of which is utilized, by a fire department, a law enforcement agency, a special fire district, or the State Fire Marshal for the principal purpose of aiding in the detection of missing persons, including, but not limited to, persons who are lost, who are trapped under debris as the result of a natural, manmade, or technological disaster, or who are drowning victims.

(2) Any person who knowingly and willfully and without lawful cause or justification inflicts ~~great~~ bodily harm, permanent disability, or death upon a police dog, ~~or~~ fire dog, SAR dog, or police horse commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

Section 3. This act shall take effect October 1, 1997.

Became a law without the Governor's approval May 16, 1997.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 12, 1997.