

Kansas Peace Officers' Association



INCORPORATED

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Testimony to the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice In Support of HB2583 February 1, 2024

Chairman Owens and Committee Members:

Our association stands in support of HB2583, a bill that would increase criminal penalties, and fines when harming or killing certain dogs or police horses.

The current Kansas Statute 21-6416 (Harming or Killing Certain Dogs) stats that if you inflict harm, disability, or death it will hold the same penalty in regard to sentencing and fines. The current statute calls for not less than 30 days imprisonment, and fines no less than \$500 and no more than \$5000. The current statute does not include police horses.

HB2583 is designed to add language to the current Kansas Statute 21-6416 that will discern between inflicting harm that does not result in a disability or death, and inflicting harm that does result in disability or death.

This bill will add two subsections to the current Kansas Statute. The new subsection (c) is inflicting harm, resulting in disability or death. Subsection (c) is a SL5 non-person felony that would hold a minimum mandatory sentence of 90 days, and fined not less than \$5000. The new subsection (d) is inflicting harm, resulting in disability or death during the act of interfering with law enforcement officers or escape from custody or detention is a SL4 non-person felony. The penalties and fines are the same as subsection (c).

Working canines are a vital member to their agencies, associations, handlers, at home families, and citizens that they protect and serve. Members of agencies, associations, and citizens grieve severely when there is a loss of a working canine. The handler personally suffers the worse in the grieving process. Not only did they lose their partner, but most have to go home and tell their family the canine they have grown attached too is not coming home.

Losing a canine does not only come with great grief, but also comes with an expensive price tag, and lengthy time of replacement. From procurement of the canine to basic trained and certified it takes approximately five months. That does not mean the new canine will be at the same level as the canine that was killed or disabled. A working canine with training at a vendor cost approximately \$18,000. Kansas does not have many local vendors for canines so most agencies have to travel to procure their canines, and stay to train with their canine. \$18,000 does not cover travel, per diem, or lodging that the agency already paid with the first canine.

It is our belief that passage of this bill will hold those that decide to kill or disable a working canine or horse more accountable than the current Kansas Statute. Passage of this bill will also assist agencies, and associations in recovering some of the cost so they can procure another canine.

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