

- Counties would lose the revenues they would ordinarily have obtained through regular license fees for dogs used in law enforcement. Counties would most likely be responsible for costs of registration materials. However, this loss in revenue would be minimal. Currently counties charge from \$2 to \$10 for registrations.
- Other than counties, the Cleveland Police Department probably has the most law enforcement canines at about five – this bill save the City of Cleveland no more than \$50.
- This bill refines the language pertaining to the formulation of county dog registration and kennel fees. Provisions in the bill state the amount of fees must not exceed estimates of administration and injured animal claims. These changes would have very little fiscal effect.
- The bill extends the deadline for dog registrations from January 20 to January 31 of each year, and removes the requirement that there be an emergency before the board of county commissioners can make this change. This provision would result in little or no change in revenues.
- Allowing law enforcement officers to obtain an unneeded police dog or horse for one dollar would have little fiscal effect.
- Exempting certain nonprofit animal shelters from having to pay dog registration fees would lose revenue to counties.
- Authorizing a board of county commissioners to increase the fee for a duplicate tag from \$.25 to a maximum of \$1.50 could increase county revenues.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Background of the Bill

This bill allows the State Highway Patrol, county sheriffs' offices, law enforcement agencies of municipalities and townships, and joint township police districts to register dogs used for law enforcement without a fee. Specifically, these law enforcement agencies may choose between registering their dogs as law enforcement canines without a fee, or obtaining a regular annual registration. The bill also states that, upon proper proof of loss, a duplicate certificate and accompanying tag must be issued at no fee. Currently, registrations cost \$2 to \$10 apiece. Lastly, the bill authorizes county commissioners to increase the fee for duplicate tags from \$.25 to a maximum of \$1.50 and the bill increases the penalty for dogfighting from a fifth degree to a fourth degree felony.

Law enforcement canines are classified into three categories: specialty, general, and dual purpose duty. Specialty dogs are used for activities such as narcotics detection and explosives and accelerant detection. General duty canines, or utility dogs, are used for tracking and general searches. Dual purpose canines perform duties of both specialty and general duty dogs. According to the state contact of the North American Police Working Dogs Association, the majority of dogs used in law enforcement are classified as dual purpose dogs. In Ohio 267 dogs are certified for law enforcement. However, this representative is aware of at least 150-200 other dogs used for such purposes that are not certified.

Effects as a Result of Registration Changes

The State Highway Patrol would no longer cover the costs of registrations for law enforcement dogs. According to a contact person from the department, only 14 dogs are used for specialty services – the number of general duty canines could not be obtained. Therefore, the state would save up to \$140 for FYs 1998 and 1999, unless more dogs are obtained.

Counties are responsible for accepting and filing dog registrations and so they would be the only entities to lose money under this bill. Counties would lose the revenues they would have obtained if the law enforcement dogs had been registered as regular dogs. However, due to the small number of dogs used for law enforcement, the loss in revenues would be small.

In Ohio the highest concentration of law enforcement canines is in Cuyahoga and Franklin counties; Cuyahoga County has 15-20 dogs for such use, Franklin uses 12 dogs, and the Cleveland Police Department uses about five dogs. The State Highway Patrol's 14 dogs are located in different counties, so the impact for any one county would be minimal.

This bill refines the language pertaining to the formulation of county dog registration and kennel fees. Present law requires the following formula:

$$(Registration\ fee) * (\#\ of\ dog\ and\ kennel\ registrations\ for\ preceding\ year) = (Aggregate\ injured\ animal\ claims) + (debts\ from\ claims) + (administration\ costs)$$

This formula provides for the counties' costs of registrations to be covered. Provisions in the bill state the amount of fees must not exceed estimates of administration and injured animal claims. These changes would have very little fiscal effect.

Stiffening the Penalty for Dogfighting

The state's costs could increase because changing the penalty for dogfighting from a fifth degree to a fourth degree felony could result in longer prison sentences – costs which fall to the state. Currently, the maximum prison term for dogfighting is 12 months; this provision would increase this maximum to 18 months. Although the total number of violations would probably stay the same and court costs would not increase, the bill could generate more revenues for counties with an increase in fines. Maximum fines for dogfighting are currently \$2,500, but would increase to a maximum of \$5,000. The Humane Society of the United States has estimated that no more than five such cases are prosecuted annually in Ohio.

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