

HB 423 -- LAW ENFORCEMENT ANIMALS

SPONSOR: Cornejo

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Crime Prevention and Public Safety by a vote of 8 to 1.

Currently, assault on a law enforcement animal is a class C misdemeanor. This bill changes the penalty to a class A misdemeanor. Additionally, if the assault on the law enforcement animal results in the death of the animal or disables the animal to the extent it is unable to be utilized as a law enforcement animal, the penalty is currently a class E felony. This bill changes the penalty to a class C felony.

Additionally, there are currently some specified circumstances exempted from various animal offenses. This bill excludes from the exemption the killing or injuring of a law enforcement animal.

Finally, this bill exempts any dog that is owned, or the service of which is employed, by a law enforcement agency and that injures another animal or human in the course of their official duties from certain animal-related statutes.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill would help bring the penalties for injuring or killing a law enforcement animal in line with the current penalties for injuring or killing a household pet. Additionally, the value of these animals is greater than what the current penalty suggests.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Cornejo and Paul Lewis.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.