

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9664

To require the establishment of a grant program to assist with certain veterinary expenses of retired Federal working dogs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 14, 2026

Mr. VAN ORDEN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

A BILL

To require the establishment of a grant program to assist with certain veterinary expenses of retired Federal working dogs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “K–9 Hero Act of
5 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) In 2022, the Government Accountability Of-
9 fice report titled “Working Dogs: Federal Agencies
10 Need to Better Address Health and Welfare”

(GAO–23–104489) included a finding that, as of 2022, approximately 5,100 working dogs were managed pursuant to 40 Federal programs, including as follows:

(A) 2,942 for the Department of Homeland Security, including—

(i) 1,097 for the Transportation Security Administration, carrying out duties relating to explosives detection;

(ii) 863 for the United States Border Patrol of United States Customs and Border Protection, carrying out duties relating to human detection;

(iii) 498 for the Office of Field Operations of United States Customs and Border Protection, carrying out duties relating to human detection;

(iv) 151 for the Office of Training and Development of United States Customs and Border Protection, carrying out duties relating to human detection;

(v) 130 for the elements of United States Customs and Border Protection involved in agriculture activities, carrying out duties relating to disease surveillance;

1 (vi) 111 for the United States Secret
2 Service;

3 (vii) 70 for the Federal Protective
4 Service, carrying out duties relating to ex-
5 plosives detection;

6 (viii) 18 for the United States Coast
7 Guard, carrying out duties relating to ex-
8 plosives detection; and

9 (ix) 4 for the Federal Emergency
10 Management Agency.

11 (B) 564 for the Air Force.

12 (C) 469 for the Army.

13 (D) 319 for the Navy.

14 (E) 189 for the Marine Corps.

15 (F) 140 for the United States Special Op-
16 erations Command.

17 (G) 32 for the National Security Agency.

18 (H) 24 for the Pentagon Force Protection
19 Agency.

20 (I) 19 for the National Geospatial-Intel-
21 ligence Agency.

22 (J) 9 for the National Guard Bureau.

23 (K) 4 for the Defense Intelligence Agency.

24 (2) A report of the Government Accountability
25 Office titled “Medical Conditions and Care for End-

1 of-Service Military Working Dogs” (GAO–17–358),
2 issued in 2017, included a finding that the average
3 cost of care for a retired military working dog is an
4 average of \$1,182 per fiscal year, excluding the cost
5 for specialty medical expenses required for such
6 dogs, such as extensive surgeries from service-related
7 injuries, medical supplements vital for health, and
8 treatments for other illnesses accumulated through
9 service.

10 (3) Owners of retired Federal working dogs are
11 therefore required to rely on nonprofit organizations
12 to assist in paying for such medical expenses.

13 (4) Nonprofit organizations secure funds for
14 such payments to owners via fundraising and do-
15 nors, but do not always receive the necessary
16 amount of funds to assist owners in covering such
17 medical expenses.

18 (5) Awarding Federal grants to such nonprofits
19 for such payments to owners would ensure the cov-
20 erage of such necessary amounts.

21 **SEC. 3. GRANT PROGRAM FOR CERTAIN MEDICAL EX-**
22 **PENSES OF RETIRED FEDERAL WORKING**
23 **DOGS.**

24 (a) GRANT PROGRAM.—Not later than October 1,
25 2026, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of

1 Homeland Security shall jointly carry out a program
2 under which the Secretaries, in coordination with the
3 heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies,
4 may award grants to eligible nonprofit organizations to
5 assist with the covered medical expenses of retired Federal
6 working dogs (in this section referred to as the “pro-
7 gram”).

8 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—A nonprofit organization is eligi-
9 ble to receive a grant under the program if the primary
10 activities of the nonprofit organization are to provide care
11 for retired Federal working dogs or financial assistance
12 to the owners of such dogs for the purpose of covering
13 the costs of covered medical expenses.

14 (c) APPLICATIONS.—To receive a grant under the
15 program, an eligible nonprofit organization shall submit
16 to the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Home-
17 land Security an application at such time, in such manner,
18 and containing such information as the Secretaries may
19 require, including information that demonstrates that the
20 nonprofit organization meets the eligibility requirements
21 under such subsection.

22 (d) LIMITATIONS ON GRANT AMOUNTS.—

23 (1) TOTAL AMOUNT LIMITATION.—The total
24 amount of grants awarded under the program to an

1 eligible nonprofit organization may not exceed
2 \$1,000,000 per fiscal year.

3 (2) REDUCTION IN GRANT AMOUNTS.—If an eli-
4 gible nonprofit organization does not expend the full
5 amount of a grant awarded to such organization
6 under the program for a fiscal year, the grant
7 amount awarded for any subsequent fiscal year shall
8 be reduced by an amount equal to such unexpended
9 amount.

10 (e) USE OF GRANT AMOUNTS.—A grant awarded
11 under the program may only be used for the purpose of
12 covering the costs of covered medical expenses of retired
13 Federal working dogs.

14 (f) OVERSIGHT.—

15 (1) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the pro-
16 gram, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of
17 Homeland Security shall jointly—

18 (A) develop data and statistics relating to
19 health outcomes for retired Federal working
20 dogs, to be used by eligible nonprofit organiza-
21 tions that receive a grant under the program;
22 and

23 (B) establish processes to monitor and doc-
24 ument the amount of funding necessary to sup-

1 port a retired Federal working dog with respect
2 to covered medical expenses.

3 (2) COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.—The Sec-
4 retary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland
5 Security shall collect such information from eligible
6 nonprofit organizations that receive a grant under
7 the program as the Secretaries determine appro-
8 priate to monitor and evaluate the use of grants, in-
9 cluding to monitor health outcomes for each retired
10 Federal working dog supported by such a grant over
11 a five-year period following the receipt of such grant.

12 (3) RECIPIENT REPORTS REQUIRED.—As a con-
13 dition of receiving a grant under the program, an el-
14 igible nonprofit organization shall agree to submit to
15 the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of
16 Homeland Security, on an annual basis for the dura-
17 tion of the period during which the eligible nonprofit
18 organization uses such grant amounts, a report de-
19 scribing the purposes for which such amounts were
20 used.

21 (g) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than October
22 1, 2027, and on an annual basis thereafter until Sep-
23 tember 30, 2031, the Secretary of Defense and the Sec-
24 retary of Homeland Security shall jointly submit to the
25 appropriate congressional committees a report on the im-

1 plementation of the program. Such report shall include the
2 following:

3 (1) An identification of the number of retired
4 Federal working dogs supported pursuant to a grant
5 awarded under the program.

6 (2) An assessment of the average annual cov-
7 ered expenses for each retired Federal working dog
8 supported pursuant to such a grant, and a descrip-
9 tion of how the Secretaries used such average to de-
10 termine grant amounts.

11 (3) A description of the disbursement of grant
12 amounts awarded under the program with respect to
13 categories of retired Federal working dogs and eligi-
14 ble nonprofit organizations.

15 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
16 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
17 out the program \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2027
18 through 2031.

19 (i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

20 (1) The term “appropriate congressional com-
21 mittees” means—

22 (A) the Committee on Armed Services and
23 the Committee on Homeland Security of the
24 House of Representatives; and

1 (B) the Committee on Armed Services and
2 the Committee on Homeland Security and Gov-
3 ernmental Affairs of the Senate.

4 (2) The term “average annual covered ex-
5 penses” means the average amount of covered ex-
6 penses for a retired Federal working dog during a
7 fiscal year.

8 (3) The term “covered expense” means any ex-
9 pense that derives from medical treatment or health
10 care provided to a retired Federal working dog, in-
11 cluding—

12 (A) any expense resulting from the treat-
13 ment by a veterinarian of an injury, illness, or
14 other health condition, regardless of whether
15 such condition manifested in such dog during
16 the period in which such dog conducted work on
17 behalf of a Federal department or agency; and

18 (B) any expense relating to a medical pro-
19 cedure, diagnostic test, medication, medical
20 supplement, or dietary alternative necessary to
21 preserve and maintain the health of such dog.

22 (4) The term “eligible nonprofit organization”
23 means a nonprofit organization that meets the eligi-
24 bility criteria under subsection (b).

1 (5) The term “retired Federal working dog”
2 means any dog previously owned and managed by a
3 Federal department or agency and assigned work on
4 behalf of such department or agency, that is retired
5 from such work.

