



Colorado Voters for Animals
A Voice for the Voiceless and a vote for the Vote-less®

HB23-1286 -Increase Penalty Cruelty Police And Service Animals **SUPPORT**

This is a simple bill that can be summed up as “let the punishment fit the crime.”

My name is Roland Halpern and I am the executive director of Colorado Voters for Animals, an all-volunteer nonpartisan nonprofit that represents over 45,000 Coloradans throughout the state.

I also sit on the executive board of Metro Denver Crime Stoppers. Many of the police dog handlers we hear from consider their canine partners to be just that, full-fledged partners.

Every time a law enforcement animal has been injured or killed in the line of duty the officers mourn the loss as on par to that of a fellow officer.

Up to this point Colorado laws have addressed only to certified police working dogs and certified working horses, but there are other specialized service animals that prove essential to other types of law enforcement. Without going into too much detail, these may include bomb sniffing dogs, wildlife detector dogs, dogs used in search and rescue, for example finding people trapped in buildings, therapy dogs, and court facility dogs used to comfort crime victims during testimony.

So it's good to see the proposed law would expand protections to all types of service animals used in law enforcement, whether it be police, fire, park rangers, and it would clear up any ambiguity as to whether a Sheriff's working dog or horse is viewed the same as a working police dog or horse, which it should.

As has been pointed out, the cost to acquire and train these animals can be extensive. Rep Armagost who used to be a K9 handler, places the cost closer to \$200,000 when all expenses are accounted for. When someone intentionally or maliciously injures or kills a law enforcement animal restitution for those costs should clearly be part of the sentencing.

Colorado Voters for Animals supports this bill.

Roland Halpern
Colorado Voters for Animals
roland@covotersforanimlas.org



Colorado Voters for Animals
191 University Blvd., #345
Denver, CO 80206