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**Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness  
Committee**

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**HB 2191**

**Brief Description:** Concerning police dogs.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Rivers, Blake, Klippert, Hurst, Haler, Takko, Alexander, Hope, Harris and Reykdal.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Changes the crime of Harming a Police Dog from an unranked felony to a seriousness level III felony offense.

**Hearing Date:** 1/18/12

**Staff:** Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

**Background:**

A police dog is a dog used by a law enforcement agency specially trained for law enforcement work and under the control of a dog handler.

A person is guilty of Harming a Police Dog if he or she maliciously injures, disables, shoots, or kills a dog that the person knows or has reason to know is a police dog. The dog does not have to be engaged in police work at the time when the person injures or kills the dog. Harming a Police Dog is an unranked class C felony offense. The maximum sentence for unranked felonies is one year of confinement, along with possible community service, legal financial obligations, community supervision, and a fine.

Dog Bites.

When a dog bites a person, the dog owner is liable for any damages that may be suffered by the victim, regardless of the former viciousness of the dog or the dog owner's knowledge of such viciousness.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill:**

The crime of Harming a Police Dog is ranked on the Sentencing Reform Act grid as a seriousness level III, class C felony offense. (One to three months in jail for a first offense.)

In addition to the criminal penalties, a court may impose a civil penalty of \$5,000 for harming a police dog or \$10,000 for killing a police dog. The fines imposed may not be reversed. Any money collected from the fines must be distributed to the jurisdiction that owns the police dog.

**Dog Bites.**

Police dogs are exempt from the statutory provisions that make a police dog owner liable for damages that a victim may sustain from a police dog bite.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.