

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 2191

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C 94 L 12  
Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Concerning police dogs.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness (originally sponsored by Representatives Rivers, Blake, Klippert, Hurst, Haler, Takko, Alexander, Hope, Harris and Reykdal).

**House Committee on Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness**  
**Senate Committee on Judiciary**

**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.

Generally, state law provides that 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.

**Summary:**

In addition to any criminal penalties that are imposed, courts are authorized to impose a civil penalty of \$5,000 for harming a police dog. If the police dog is killed, courts must impose a mandatory civil penalty of \$5,000; however, the court has authority to increase the fine up to a maximum of \$10,000. Any money collected from the civil fines must be distributed to the jurisdiction that owns the police dog.

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

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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.*

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	98	0	
Senate	49	0	(Senate amended)
House	95	0	(House concurred)

**Effective:** June 7, 2012