



Brian Webb <brian.webbak59@gmail.com>

Proposed Statute change regarding EMS and pre-hospital care for animals

1 message

Susan Whiton <[REDACTED]>

Fri, Dec 27, 2024 at 8:22 AM

To: Representative.Calvin.Schrage@akleg.gov

Cc: [REDACTED]

Dear Representative Schrage,

This letter has been written to show the support of MAT+SAR Search and Rescue for the pending legislation change being proposed by Rep. Schrage. This legislation will address the need for a change in the State statutes to allow EMS personnel to provide pre-hospital care and transport for injured animals. This change is particularly needed for dogs that may be working in risky or dangerous situations like law enforcement K9s and search and rescue K9s. Currently, EMS providing such care without being an AK-licensed veterinarian is considered a misdemeanor. This legislative change to existing State statutes seeks to align Alaska with other states that have already enacted or proposed similar legislation. This proposal is a common sense change that is needed to provide support for EMS and working K9s.

Sincerely,

Susan Whiton, DVM

President

MAT+SAR Search and Rescue



To: Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol Room 410
Juneau AK, 99801
Representative.Calvin.Schrage@akleg.gov

From: Kate D. Zimmerman, DO, FACEP, FAEMS of Yarmouth, ME

Date: January 28, 2025

Re: **HB70** *An Act relating to the emergency medical services for operational canines; relating to the powers, duties, and liability of emergency medical technicians and mobile intensive care paramedics; relation to the practice of veterinary medicine; and providing for an effective date*

I am writing in support of HB70. I am a board-certified Emergency Medicine and Emergency Medicine Services (EMS) physician in Maine, the Associate State Medical Director for Maine EMS, the EMS Medical Director for the National Association of Veterinary EMS as well as the Medical Director for the City of Portland's Special Reaction Team. I am the lead author Maine EMS' Operational Canine Protocols which were written in collaboration with local and national emergency/critical care veterinary specialists, canine handlers, EMS clinicians and EMS physicians. I have been working at the national level to promote the pre-hospital treatment and transportation of working canines as well as establishing a standardized curriculum for prehospital operational canine care. Though I do not represent my employer, Maine EMS or the national organizations to which I belong, I feel compelled to testify based on my own experience with working canines.

Outside of the hospital setting, I work as a medical director for tactical paramedics embedded in a specialized law enforcement team. Canines are utilized in some of our operations and when deployed, serve as a vital part in the success of our mission by decreasing the risk to those of us involved. These canines are our teammates. They are there to protect us as well as any civilians while achieving our missions' goals. For these reasons, it is important that we be able to treat and transport our canines should they become ill or injured in the line of duty. There is a tremendous amount of time, money and training invested in these team members, as well as an indescribable bond that develops between the handler and their canine. The cost of losing a canine to a preventable death is immeasurable.

You may ask why the handlers cannot treat and transport their own canines and why do we need to rely on EMS to fill this gap? Statistics show that less than 5% of canine handlers receive adequate first aid training to render aid to their injured canine. Furthermore, the handler may not be able to render aid if they are injured or incapacitated themselves. Understanding that the provision of care to humans takes priority, EMS clinicians are well-equipped and often willing to treat and transport injured operational canines. With proper additional training regarding the safety of working around/with these canines and learning about their unique anatomic and physiological differences, EMS clinicians, working within their predefined scope of practice (i.e., the scope of their current EMS license) have the tools to help. This legislation is one more step to enable them to do so.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.



Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801
Representative.calvin.schrage@akleg.gov

4, February 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

I am writing to express my strong support for the enactment of HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s (OpK9s).


Points which may be used:

1. Alaska's OpK9s are our protectors, our teammates, and at times we trust our lives and well being to them. They should be afforded the same level of emergency care as their human partners.
2. The loss of one of these highly trained emergency responders can be devastating not only for their agency's mission success, but also for its fiscal health. To replace an OpK9, can be years in the making and cost many thousands of dollars before they are operational.
3. Resuscitating, stabilizing, and transporting these canine team members to emergency veterinary care if it is available is the desire of Alaska EMS, and the reason we support this legislation.
4. Alaska is a remote and austere frontier EMS system with limited access to veterinary services, unless in or near an urban center. There must be the ability for these OpK9s to access point-of-injury care and transport, in order to have a fighting chance at survival. Alaska EMS can provide that ability with passage of HB 70.
5. With proper training and veterinary collaboration of protocols and standing orders, Alaska EMS can be equipped to adapt our human emergency medical skills, equipment, and medications for OpK9s, even under our challenging conditions.

The goal of Alaska EMS is straightforward: To provide the basic and advanced life support necessary to keep OpK9s alive and deliver them to emergency veterinary care in the best possible condition.

I deeply appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation and it is a commonsense approach to protect Alaska's operational K9s.

Sincerely,

Mio Rhein, Captain
Paramedic, FP-C, TP-C, CCP-C
South Tongass Fire Department
Ketchikan, Alaska


From: [Quigley Peterson](#)
To: [Rep. Calvin Schrage](#)
Subject: HB 70
Date: Thursday, January 30, 2025 7:06:15 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear Representative Schrage,

Please record my strong support for HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s.

Capital City Fire & Rescue has treated canines in the past, including for smoke inhalation, unaware there was any prohibition. Canines work with human partners and deserve basic emergency care. Our best example for this is the military.

Replacing an OpK9 can take years of training and cost many thousands of dollars before they can work. As a member of the State EMS Medical Advisory Committee, please consider this request for treatment and transport of these co-workers to emergency veterinary care.

Our experience and past training in Juneau has taught us that we can collaborate to configure protocols and standing orders, thus adapting our human emergency medical skills, equipment, and medications for OpK9s, even under our challenging conditions.

Thank you for your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation and commonsense approach to protect Alaska's operational K9s.

Sincerely,

--

[Tim Quigley Peterson, MD](#)
Medical Director
Capital City Fire & Rescue



From: [Sean McPeck](#)
To: [Rep. Calvin Schrage](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: HB 70
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025 3:57:49 PM

Representative Calvin Schrage,
My name is Sean McPeck, DVM.

I currently am the owner of Tier 1 Veterinary Medical Center, and was proud to serve 19 years in the US Army, 6 years as a Veterinary Corps Officer. I did 4 tours to Afghanistan, which totaled almost 2 years. During this time I saw the operational need, and amazing results, of implementing cross training between human care providers and Veterinary personnel in order to save Working Dogs (Operational Canines).

I fully support HB 70, and would be whilling to provide any statements, or testimony if needed.

Respectfully,
Sean McPeck, DVM
[REDACTED]

January 31, 2025

Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol Room 410
Juneau, AK 99801
Representative.Calvin.Schrage@akleg.gov

RE: House Bill No. 70, 34th Legislature, State of Alaska

Representative Schrage,

Please accept my support and gratitude for your sponsorship of HB 70 to provide care for Operational Canines in the State of Alaska and to protect those who are called upon to render them medical aid.

Operational canines are integral members of their teams and risk their health and lives in service to the residents of Alaska. In respect of their service, they deserve the same level of emergent medical care available to the rest of their team. Given the operational environments, a veterinarian may not be immediately available and Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics (formerly Mobile Intensive Care Paramedics) may be called upon to render aid.

To ensure this aid is available, HB 70 adds language that provides clarification that the operational canine is treated as a patient in the same fashion as their human counterpart. Further, the EMT, Paramedic/MICP and/or Dispatcher are afforded the same degree of authority, protection and indemnity they receive in the normal course of their duties to include Operational Canines.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joseph C. Livengood MD". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "J" and a distinct "MD" at the end.

Joseph C. Livengood, MD, NRP, FACS
Medical Director
Alaska Department of Public Safety



Seth McMillan
Anchorage, Alaska

December 28, 2024

Alaska Legislative Body,

This letter is to voice my support for the HB 70 bill being introduced by Rep. Calvin Schrage that proposes statutory changes to allow medical personnel to provide emergency medical care for sick or injured operational canines – i.e. police and search and rescue canines.

I have worked in local law enforcement for the largest municipal agency in Alaska for 21 years, 16 on the tactical team. I am also a licensed paramedic. I work closely with, and am regularly protected by, K9 handler/dog teams. It would not be a stretch to say that my life has been saved by a K9 multiple times. We have had dogs assaulted and stabbed. A partner agency has had K9s shot and killed. At the point of wounding, where these K9s have the highest potential for injury, the only immediate access to care will be from local medical personnel and tactical medics. The opportunity for immediate veterinary care is highly unlikely, and even if there was a veterinarian nearby, it's likely the scene would be too dangerous to allow a vet access to the K9.

Speaking for myself and many of my associates in the tactical medical community in Alaska, a small statutory change that would provide peace of mind to providers in low frequency, high risk, high profile events, is a common sense vote.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts, and thank you for advocating for our operational canine partners.

Sincerely,



Seth McMillan

Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, Alaska 99801

January 29, 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

I am writing a letter to express my strong support for the enactment of HB70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s. As an EMS Medical Director and tactical physician, I have first-hand experience working with operational K9s and a clear understanding of the challenges and critical importance of our prehospital providers being able to provide point-of-injury care to our canine partners. In the case of APD K9 Midas, I have personally witnessed his life being saved by immediate advanced care when he was stabbed with a sword on a SWAT mission. This allowed for a full recovery and return to duty. I work with several paramedics who have attended K9 casualty care courses on their own time and expense to be prepared to provide this care when able. The need and commitment are there, we now need the support to provide this care without jeopardizing our licenses. Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DC' followed by a stylized flourish.

David Cadogan, MD FACEP
Emergency Medicine Physician
Medical Director: Girdwood Fire Department and Guardian Flight Alaska
Tactical Physician: Anchorage Police Department SWAT and Alaska State Troopers South
Central SWAT

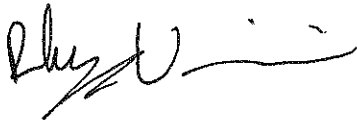
Honorable Representative Schrage,

Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol (ANSP) supports the proposed legislation that would authorize Alaska Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to provide point-of -injury care and transport for operational K9s.

ANSP provides support to the State of Alaska in Search and Rescue (SAR) situations. While we do not utilize canines in our patrol, we are regularly partnered with canines and their handlers in trainings, scenarios, the annual Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage (NSAA) Ski Train, and real-life emergency situations. The ability to help take care of and transport our canine partners if they are hurt, injured, or sick is of great importance. They are emergency providers just as are the human SAR responders. The dogs deserve the respect and care, same as any other member of a SAR response, to emergency medical care and transport.

It is now standard practice in police and military units to support their canines in health and welfare before, during, and after deployments. It stands to reason that SAR working dogs merit equal support as they are also public servants, but without pay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rhyss Vivian', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rhyss Vivian

Director, ANSP

Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801

January 27, 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

I am writing to express my strong support for the enactment of HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS personnel to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s (OpK9s).

As one of only five nationally certified Tactical Paramedics (TP-C) in Alaska, a retired enlisted military combat medic, and a former medical and security contractor for the U.S. Department of State with multiple deployments to Afghanistan, I have witnessed firsthand the critical role EMS and tactical medical teams play in delivering pre-veterinary emergency care to OpK9s. Resuscitating, stabilizing, and transporting these canine team members to emergency veterinary care is not only vital for mission success but also essential for maintaining team morale.

During my deployments, I often operated in remote and austere conditions with limited access to veterinary services. Before being assigned to operational teams or deployed, we underwent specialized training, including the national K9 Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) course. This training equipped us to adapt our human emergency medical skills, equipment, and medications for OpK9s. With proper training and protocols developed in collaboration with coalition veterinarians, we ensured seamless care for these unique patients, even under our challenging conditions.

The goal of Alaska EMS is straightforward: to provide the basic and advanced life support necessary to keep OpK9s alive and deliver them to emergency veterinary care in the best possible condition.

I deeply appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation. I believe it will garner bipartisan support as a commonsense measure to protect Alaska's operational K9s.

Sincerely,

Brian L. Webb, FF2/Paramedic, NRP, FP-C, CCEMT-P, TP-C, COSS
CMSgt | USAF | IDMT | Retired

[Redacted Signature]



Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801
Representative.calvin.schrage@akleg.gov

3 February 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

On behalf of the K9 Tactical Emergency Casualty Care Working Group (K9 TECC) and the National Association of Veterinary EMS (NAVEMS), I am writing in full support for the enactment of HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s (OpK9s).

I am a board-certified Emergency and Critical Care Veterinarian and active Certified Tactical Paramedic for the Lee County SWAT team in Auburn, AL. I serve as a US Army Reserve Veterinary Corps Officer; Veterinary Medical Director for NAVEMS; Lead and founder for the K9-Tactical Emergency and Casualty Care (K9 TECC) Working Group; Board of Advisers for the Committee of Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (C- TECC), and Member for the Defense Committee on Trauma, Canine Combat Casualty Care committee. All the committees and working groups for which I serve, have the mission of fostering awareness, enhancing the quality, and increasing the availability of Veterinary Prehospital Care through advocacy, education, and research. I have had the privilege of working with various States from across the country to help compose and pass legislation like that desired in Alaska. To date, over 20 states have already enacted or are in the process of developing preveterinary care legislation granting authority for EMS providers to render emergency care to injured Operational K9s (Refer to *Schoenfeld DW et al. Nation-Wide Variation in Presence of Legislation or Protocols for EMS Care of Operational Canines. Prehosp Disaster Med. 2024 Feb;39(1):59-64*).

Operational K9s (OpK9s) serve Federal, State and Local governmental and non-governmental organizations have continuously proven a force multiplier in the success of many operations. Like their human counterparts, OpK9s remain at a high risk for LOD injuries and death. Despite their invaluable contribution towards safeguarding society's freedoms, prehospital care for these OpK9s remains grossly lacking. Most OpK9 handlers receive little to no training in basic first responder care for their canine partner. Veterinary- specific EMS services do not exist, nor do veterinary personnel typically deploy as part of an OpK9 response element or team. Although human-trained EMS providers have the capability to render life-saving aid to an injured OpK9, the lack of defined legal authority authorizing them to render such care hampers their willingness to do so. Lack of clear legal authority leaves the EMS community open to the potential risk of liability and legal reprisal when, and if, they choose to render out-of-hospital emergency care to OpK9s.



The lack of readily available point of injury care and high-risk of traumatic injury provide a recipe for high mortality rates for these invaluable OpK9s. As a vital member of our team, OpK9s deserve access to timely prehospital care to ensure their continued survival and value to our society. Many of the injuries sustained by these OpK9s in the field are easily mitigated with the application of basic first aid techniques. The same techniques that EMS responders are already trained and certified to perform to save human life. It is imperative that we provide an avenue for EMS responders to render such life-saving care to OpK9s when veterinary personnel are not available. Enactment of Preveterinary Care Legislation is the first, and most important, step for providing this avenue and availability of care.

Operational K9s are our companions, teammates, and defenders; they dedicate their lives to ensure society's safety and freedom. It is imperative that we afford OpK9s the care they deserve when injured in the LOD while protecting us. To eliminate any legalities that may interfere with an injured OpK9 receiving appropriate and timely prehospital care, we strongly urge you to support Alaska's Preveterinary Care/VEMS initiative.

I appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation and it is a commonsense approach to protect Alaska's Operational K9s.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lee Palmer".

Lee Palmer, DVM, MS, DACVECC, CCRP, EMT-T, NRP, TP-C
Colonel, Veterinary Corps, US Army Reserves
Lead, K9 Tactical Emergency Casualty Care Working Group
Veterinary Medical Director, National Association of Veterinary EMS
(NAVEMS) Education Medical Director, Univ., Penn., Penn Vet Working Dog
Practitioner Program

Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801

January 28, 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

I am writing to express my strong support for the enactment of HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s (OpK9s).

Alaska's OpK9s play an essential role in ensuring public safety and supporting critical operations. When an OpK9 is injured in the line of duty, their lives and the missions they support depend on timely and effective medical intervention and EMS should be allowed to transport them to an appropriate veterinary specialist.

Resuscitating, stabilizing, and transporting these canine team members to emergency veterinary care is the straightforward and compassionate desire of Alaska EMS clinicians, and the reason this legislation is so crucial. Alaska's remote and austere frontier EMS system often limits access to veterinary services, especially outside of urban centers. This lack of immediate care options places these valuable animals at heightened risk. Point-of-injury care and transport capabilities provided by Alaska EMS would give these OpK9s a fighting chance at survival.

The goal of Alaska EMS is clear: to deliver basic and advanced life support that keeps OpK9s alive and allows them to reach emergency veterinary care in the best possible condition. By passing HB 70, Alaska can set a standard of care that reflects the value we place on these courageous canine team members and ensures their safety and survival.

I deeply appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation. HB 70 is a commonsense and compassionate measure that will protect Alaska's Operational K9s and support the vital work they perform. Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and I urge you to continue championing its passage.

Sincerely,



Michael Levy MD
CMO Anchorage Areawide EMS
Medical Director Anchorage Fire Department and Chugiak Volunteer Fire and Rescue

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Skyline Medical Consulting
Marc Dumas, MD, FACEP, FAAEM
Emergency Medicine/ Tactical Medicine/ Wilderness Medicine
/Emergency Medical Services/



Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801

January 29, 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

As an EMS and tactical physician, I am writing to express my strong support for the enactment of HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s (OpK9s).

As a 22-year SWAT team member and a pre-hospital clinician since 1979, I have much experience in this realm. In 1998, my tactical medic and I saved the life of Teka, an Alaska State Trooper K-9 who had been shot by a perpetrator at contact distance with a high-powered rifle in a remote setting. During this 24-hour siege, and after rendering emergency care to this critically injured K-9 officer, I had to assign my only tactical medic to take a patrol vehicle and rush this poor animal to a veterinary emergency room because local EMS was not allowed to transport K-9 casualties. This removed my second set of hands from a clearly deadly scenario for over an hour, seriously degrading any further medical response. Additionally, the K-9 remained in the back of the vehicle and could not receive ongoing care for the duration of transport.

Operational K-9s are a critical resource for law enforcement (and the public). They provide invaluable capabilities, including tracking, explosive and drug detection, rapid takedown, and show-of-force, just to name a few. These are potential life-saving actions. And they do not come cheaply, as an OpK9 requires years of extensive training before it is operational.

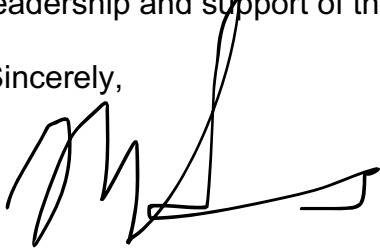
EMS personnel view OpK9s as colleagues and teammates, just as we view law enforcement officers and other first responders. Given the remote and austere

environment in which we often live and work, local EMS providers represent the last, best hope for anyone seriously ill or injured, including OpK9s.

EMS has the ability to manage injured OpK9s provided it has appropriate veterinary training, equipment, protocols, and standing orders. We can provide basic and advanced life support and deliver them to definitive veterinary care, thus preserving both a life and a precious resource.

I feel strongly about HB 70 and see it as a greater good. I greatly appreciate your leadership and support of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MD' followed by a stylized flourish.

Marc Dumas, MD

Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801

Representative.calvin.schrage@akleg.gov

February 28, 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

I am writing to express my strong support for the enactment of HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s (OpK9s).

As a licensed Alaska Veterinarian who has practiced in both urban and remote areas of Alaska as well as having worked with training EMS providers nationwide to provide pre-hospital care for OpK9s, I recognize the significant importance of such legislation in our state. These OpK9s are a valuable resource for many communities as well as our state and nationally. They are teammates of our first responders and highly valuable assets often receiving thousands of dollars of training to become certified in their duties. As a Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care specialist I am even more acutely aware of the difference that early intervention can make for critically ill or injured OpK9s. Point of injury care can make the difference between life and death both for humans as well as OpK9s and EMS providers have the skills with some additional training to be able to provide this care for our OpK9s when veterinary care is not immediately available and help to transport these patients to a veterinarian for on-going care. The Alaska EMS system already has the infrastructure to make this possible and with proper veterinary training and oversight can be a vital link in the potential survival of an injured OpK9.

The goal of Alaska EMS is straightforward: To provide the basic and advanced life support necessary to keep OpK9s alive and deliver them to emergency veterinary care in the best possible condition.

I deeply appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation and it is a commonsense approach to protect Alaska's operational K9s.

I am also happy to provide any resources or testimony that may help in this critical endeavor.

Sincerely,

Melissa Edwards DVM

Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care

National Association of Veterinary EMS (NAVEMS) - Treasurer

Juneau, Alaska

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801
jeremy.houston@akleg.gov

2/25/2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

I am writing to express my strong support for the enactment of HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s (OpK9s).

Points which may be used:


1. Alaska's OpK9s are our protectors, our teammates, and often our friends. They should be afforded the same level of emergency care as their human partners.
2. The loss of one of these highly trained emergency responders can be devastating not only for their agency's mission success, but also for its fiscal health. To replace an OpK9, can be years in the making and cost many thousands of dollars before they are operational.
3. Resuscitating, stabilizing, and transporting these canine team members to emergency veterinary care is the simple desire of Alaska EMS, and the reason we support this legislation.
4. Alaska is a remote and austere frontier EMS system with limited access to veterinary services, unless in or near an urban center. There must be the ability for these OpK9s to access point-of-injury care and transport, in order to have a fighting chance at survival. Alaska EMS can provide that ability with passage of HB 70.
5. The majority of Alaska EMS faces transport times in excess of 1-3 hours. When considering BLS versus ALS capabilities, these distances must be taken into account.
6. With proper training and veterinary collaboration of protocols and standing orders, Alaska EMS can be equipped to adapt our human emergency medical skills, equipment, and medications for OpK9s, even under our challenging conditions.

The goal of Alaska EMS is straightforward: To provide the basic and advanced life support necessary to keep OpK9s alive and deliver them to emergency veterinary care in the best possible condition.

I deeply appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation and it is a commonsense approach to protect Alaska's operational K9s.

Sincerely,

Stewlow, Deven
Police Lieutenant
Chickaloon Tribal Police Department
Sutton AK, 99674





Veterinary Tactical Group

P.O. Box 1070

Vass, NC 28394,

Phone: 910-797-6215

E-Mail: contact@vettacgroup.com Web: www.vettacgroup.com

Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801
jeremy.houston@akleg.gov

March 2, 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

I am writing to express my strong support for the enactment of HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s (OpK9s).

1. Alaska's OpK9s put their lives on the line for our safety and should be afforded the same level of emergency care as their human partners, however the veterinary resources for point-of-injury care are typically not available outside of a veterinary clinic setting.
2. The loss of one of these highly trained emergency responders can be devastating not only for their agency's mission success, but also for its fiscal health. To replace an OpK9, can be years in the making and cost many thousands of dollars before they are operational.
3. Some critically injured or ill OpK9's require treatment above the Basic Life Support (BLS) level at the level of a Paramedic. Paramedic-level EMS providers are already trained and experienced in performing these life-saving measures on injured or ill human patients. In the veterinary clinical setting, they would be performed primarily by veterinary technicians, not veterinarians, with training at a similar level to Paramedics. I support allowing EMS providers to treat OpK9's up to the scope of care of their "human" training and certification.
4. As a military veterinarian assigned to Tier-One US Special Operations Command K9 units in Iraq and Afghanistan, I saw first-hand that proper training and veterinary collaboration directly leads to life-saving treatment of K9's by EMS personnel in austere environments. Precedent for successful treatment and transport of critically injured working dogs by trained combat medics is demonstrated in the study *Gunshot wounds in military working dogs in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom: 29 cases (2003–2009)*. Journal of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care. 2013 Jan;23(1):47-52. Baker JL, et al. Alaska EMS can provide similar life-saving ability with passage of HB 70.

I strongly Alaska EMS to provide the basic and advanced life support necessary to keep OpK9s alive and deliver them to emergency veterinary care in the best possible condition.

I deeply appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation and dedication to the health and safety of Alaska's heroic Operational K9's.

Sincerely,

Janice Baker, DVM, MS, DACVPM



Mayor
Suzanne LaFrance

Anchorage Fire Department



Fire Chief
Douglas Schrage

The Honorable Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol Room 410
Juneau, AK 99801

February 20, 2025

Representative Schrage:

Thank you for sponsoring House Bill 70, which would enable emergency medical providers to treat law enforcement canines injured in the line of duty. This practice is currently prohibited by Alaska Statutes.

This is common-sense legislation that appropriately recognizes the elevated risk faced by canines engaged in policing activities and their status as co-equals in law enforcement agencies.

The Anchorage Fire Department fully endorses and supports House Bill 70. Thank you for bringing this legislation forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Schrage

Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801
Representative.calvin.schrage@akleg.gov

4, February 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

I am writing to express my strong support for the enactment of HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s (OpK9s).


Points which may be used:

1. Alaska's OpK9s are our protectors, our teammates, and at times we trust our lives and well being to them. They should be afforded the same level of emergency care as their human partners.
2. The loss of one of these highly trained emergency responders can be devastating not only for their agency's mission success, but also for its fiscal health. To replace an OpK9, can be years in the making and cost many thousands of dollars before they are operational.
3. Resuscitating, stabilizing, and transporting these canine team members to emergency veterinary care if it is available is the desire of Alaska EMS, and the reason we support this legislation.
4. Alaska is a remote and austere frontier EMS system with limited access to veterinary services, unless in or near an urban center. There must be the ability for these OpK9s to access point-of-injury care and transport, in order to have a fighting chance at survival. Alaska EMS can provide that ability with passage of HB 70.
5. With proper training and veterinary collaboration of protocols and standing orders, Alaska EMS can be equipped to adapt our human emergency medical skills, equipment, and medications for OpK9s, even under our challenging conditions.

The goal of Alaska EMS is straightforward: To provide the basic and advanced life support necessary to keep OpK9s alive and deliver them to emergency veterinary care in the best possible condition.

I deeply appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation and it is a commonsense approach to protect Alaska's operational K9s.

Sincerely,

Mio Rhein, Captain
Paramedic, FP-C, TP-C, CCP-C
South Tongass Fire Department
Ketchikan, Alaska




March 15, 2025

The Honorable Calvin Schrage
(State Capitol Room 410)
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HB 70

Dear, Representative Calvin Schrage:

My name is Mark Stigar and I am a Search and Rescue K9 Handler, head of Training and Safety who resides in the Mat-Su as part of MATSAR Search and Rescue.

I support HB70 because myself and other K9 Handlers respond Statewide not just Urban areas where Veterinarians are available, but to areas in the State where the nearest Vet is many miles away.

Statewide there are approximately 20-25 Operational SAR K9s at any one time, not all of these are Operational in all specialties (Avalanche, Human Remains Detection etc).

During my term as Alaska Search and Rescue Association President, we researched that only two SAR K9s needed Veterinarian support during a 5 year period and none of these were for a Trauma injury.

During one Operational Deployment, 4 K9s and Handlers deployed to the Village of Golovin, and from Golovin we were transported 30 minutes across the Golovin Sound by Boat to our Search Area. The next day, one hour away by ATV. If my K9 was severely injured the closest possible Veterinarian treatment was in Nome, and hopefully the Daily flight would be available and the weather suitable, not to mention the transport to get into the Village.

If my K9 was severely injured any advanced medical assistance ETTs, EMT, Paramedics, Village Health Aid would be critical and welcome until I could get my K9 to Veterinarian treatment. All SAR K9s and their Handlers are Volunteers. They pay for much of the training and other bills to train their K9s to become Operational to support Alaska.

A "First Responder" (EMT, Paramedic and others) violating the law, to Treat another "First Responder " Working K9 : Law Enforcement, SAR etc with a Trauma injury to sustain their life until they can reach Veterinarian care is absolutely absurd.

Thank you and I fully support your efforts making Alaska better.

Mark Stigar (Col. Ret. US Army)
K9 Team 2 Training and Safety -MATSAR Search and Rescue
[REDACTED]

Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801
jeremy.houston@akleg.gov

2 March 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

I am writing to express my strong support for the enactment of HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s (OpK9s).

As an Army veterinarian of 15 years, I have seen first hand the benefits of point of injury and enroute care (prehospital medicine) and believe that multiple dogs were saved due to these actions.

The goal of prehospital medicine is to provide life saving care. The most common preventable forms of death in military working dogs are hemorrhage, loss of airway, tension pneumothorax and heat injury. These injury patterns have been proven to be similar in police OpK9s. Therefore prehospital care focuses on hemorrhage control, providing an airway, alleviating a tension pneumothorax, and starting active cooling.

A recent study by Storer et al. evaluating trauma in military working dogs showed that dogs that did not receive non-DVM care enroute to definitive care were 3.5 times more likely to die versus those that received care. Furthermore, a 2009 retrospective study published by Baker et al evaluating gunshot wounds in military working dogs found that all survivors received point of injury care and/or enroute care.

In my previous assignment, I trained Army combat paramedics for 3 years on how to perform prehospital critical tasks in working dogs. This training occurred over a 3-day time period and was nested within their mandatory training requirements. There I learned that paramedics are already trained in the indications and techniques of emergent tasks; therefore, my job was to primarily teach them how to perform these same tasks in a canine patient. I have also worked with EMS personnel in Tennessee through the University of Tennessee and learned that their skill set is equal to or greater than that of the combat paramedic. Therefore, I believe that given the proper training it is reasonable to enable EMS personnel in AK to perform these life saving tasks while enroute to a veterinary emergency facility. Authorizing HB70 does not take away the value or necessity of veterinary professionals. In fact, it enhances the ability of the veterinarian to provide continued lifesaving care by potentially preventing death prior to arrival.

The goal of Alaska EMS is straightforward: To provide the basic and advanced life support necessary to keep OpK9s alive and deliver them to emergency veterinary care in the best possible condition.

I deeply appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation and it is a commonsense approach to protect Alaska's operational K9s.

Sincerely,

N. Shane Chumbler
DVM, DACVECC





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Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801
jeremy.houston@akleg.gov

March 05, 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

I am writing to express my strong support for the enactment of HB 70, which would authorize Alaska EMS clinicians to provide emergency point-of-injury care and transport for Alaska's Operational K9s (OpK9s).

The vast and untamed terrain of Alaska often creates a logistical challenge evacuating dogs to definitive care that has led to their deaths with no field treatment. There exists a great need to have a group of trained para-professionals trained in basic field medicine to provide stabilization support and enroute treatment. This kind of care is afforded to a majority of military, secret Service and Us Customs and Border Patrol K-9s in theaters of operation as a standard procedure. The goal is to get all operational K9's to a veterinary treatment facility alive and in the best shape possible to return to duty. The austere terrain can make those evacuation times become hours before transport to a veterinary facility is available and often hundreds of miles away. These animals are true unpaid heroes that work tirelessly to save us and deserve the best care we can provide.

In Alaska we depend on these dogs for find sick and injured civilians and they are the only tool we have to find lost hikers or skiers trapped in an Avalanche or lost in the wilderness. Additionally these dogs are invaluable tools , keeping us safe from unexploded ordinance and finding smuggler's cache of drugs that are killing our youth . These dogs are our protectors, our teammates, and often our friends. They should be afforded the same level of emergency care as their human partners.

You may not be aware but these dogs are a rare commodity nationwide and losing even one of these highly trained emergency responders can be devastating not only to their agency's mission success, but also for its fiscal health. To replace an OpK9, can be years in the making and cost many thousands of dollars and months of training before they are operational.

Having additional personal trained to provide trauma resuscitative care, stabilization and safe transportation for these canine team members to emergency veterinary care is the simple desire of Alaska EMS, and the reason we support this legislation. There must be the ability for these OpK9s to access point-of-injury care and transport, in order to have a fighting chance at survival.

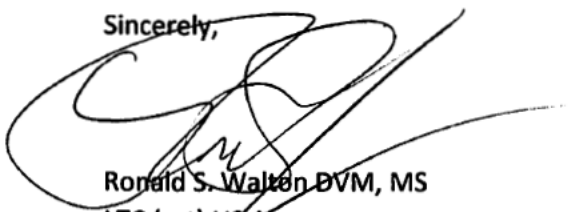
Alaska EMS can provide that ability with passage of HB 70. The majority of Alaska EMS see transport times in excess of 1-3 hours. When considering Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) capabilities, these distances must be taken into account even for humans that can be the difference between life and death for the patient . With proper certification , training and with local veterinary collaboration of protocols and

standing operation orders, Alaska EMS can be equipped to adapt our human emergency medical skills, equipment, and medications for OpK9s, even under our challenging conditions.

The goal of Alaska EMS is straightforward: To provide the basic and advanced life support necessary to keep OpK9s alive and deliver them to emergency veterinary care in the best possible condition enhancing their survival and their organizations continued success providing support to the people of Alaska.

I deeply appreciate your leadership in sponsoring this critical legislation and it is a common sense approach to protect Alaska's operational K9s.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Ronald S. Walton, is written over the typed name and extends across the middle of the page.

Ronald S. Walton DVM, MS

LTC (ret) US Army

Diplomate American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Medicine

Diplomate American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine

Sterling, Alaska 99672



Representative Calvin Schrage
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801

March 20, 2025

Dear Representative Schrage,

I am writing to express my strong support for the passage of House Bill (HB70). I am a private citizen with no professional relationship with first responders, search and rescue volunteers or law enforcement entities. There are several reasons why I see passage of this bill enhances public safety and honors the efforts and sacrifices of operational handlers and their K9 partners.

My father is a retired Captain in the Alaska State Troopers with over 30 years of service. Many of these years he spent in partnership with K9 Meik. The work my father did with Meik resulted in untold and incalculable good to the citizens of Alaska with the drugs they kept off the streets and the criminals who were prevented from harming the public by their work. Meik was responsible for keeping my father from being injured or killed on several occasions. When I was speaking with my father about House Bill 70 and asking for his opinion about this bill, his response was "why wouldn't it pass"? That is a great question.

The training a K9 and their handler go through together to become a cohesive and effective team represents a vast commitment of time and financial resources. The years and dollars invested into working K9's are worth conserving. HB70 would give emergency providers an invaluable tool to assist until a higher level of care by a licensed veterinarian is available.

Fentanyl is a plague that has killed hundreds of thousands of Americans. Working K9's are vulnerable to poisoning via contact with this drug and other substances. These drugs are fatal in short order without swift administration of care and medication such as Naloxone which is widely available and carried by emergency responders as standard. What possible objection exists to justify preventing properly trained medical personnel operating under established veterinarian protocols from rendering life-saving care to K9 officers or rescue dogs?

Operational K9's are critical partners for law enforcement, military and rescue organizations. They deserve honor and priority medical attention to have their lives preserved. I view this as a duty the public owes to our K9 heroes.

I understand the desire of opponents of this bill to ensure the highest standard of care is maintained, proper veterinary medical attention is provided and under-trained responders are prevented from practicing veterinary medicine. These are valid concerns, but in an emergency the best care is that which is appropriate, available and rendered timely. This bill allows professionals we trust to save human lives to render that essential care with proper training and approved emergency protocols to render critical aid without jeopardizing their licenses or being criminally charged for practicing veterinary medicine without a license.

Please consider passing this bill without delay. It is good for the public, fulfills the public duty to protect and care for Operational K9's and facilitates increased public safety. I will conclude by paraphrasing my father's question. Why wouldn't this pass? It is the right thing to do in every aspect.

Respectfully,

Reid Bowman

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]