

SUSPENSION

A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY LEGISLATOR DIXON

Re: Support for Increased Penalties for Assault of Police Animals

WHEREAS, K-9 Officer Mitchell is a six-year-old German shepherd who has been a member of the Jamestown police force since 2011; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, following a six-hour standoff with a murder suspect, K-9 Officer Mitchell received life-threatening injuries during the apprehension and arrest of the suspect; and

WHEREAS, as a result of this confrontation and the serious injuries sustained by the K-9, New York State Senator Young introduced Mitchell's Law, making it a Class-E felony to injure a K-9 officer or other police animal; and

WHEREAS, this honorable body finds that animals that perform law enforcement duties, including search and rescue, drug and bomb detection, and the apprehension of criminals, deserve protection when they are injured in the line-of-duty; and

WHEREAS, many law enforcement and animal advocacy groups support the increase in penalties for assault on an animal performing official police duties, including the New York State Police Investigators Association, the New York State Sheriffs' Association, the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, the Humane Society, and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; and

WHEREAS, seventh-grade students in Jason Steinagle's class at Hamburg Middle School were inspired when New York State Trooper Sean Pierce and his service canine, K.D., visited their classroom to demonstrate obedience training and narcotics detection. Trooper Pierce shared success stories about protecting citizens and providing for our common welfare. Students were dissatisfied when they learned that the current penalties for injuring or taking the life of a police animal were insufficient and they were motivated to change the state penal code; and

WHEREAS, select seventh-grade students from Hamburg Middle School were invited by New York State Senator Chris Jacobs to support Mitchell's Law before the New York State Senate. Bill No. S961 (2017) successfully passed the New York State Senate with a 59 to 3 vote on May 16, 2017.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that this honorable body congratulates the New York Senate for passage of Mitchell's Law, S961 (2017), and hereby urges the Assembly to approve its companion bill, A6737 (2017); and, be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the Western New York Delegation to the New York State Senate and Assembly, the office of Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, and any party deemed necessary and proper.