

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2024 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 5421**

By Delegates Barnhart and Jeffries

[Introduced February 02, 2024; Referred to the  
Committee on Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section  
2 designated §15-2-57, relating to creating a West Virginia K9 Search and Rescue Advisory  
3 Committee.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 2. WEST VIRIGNIA STATE POLICE.**

**§15-2-57. West Virginia K9 Search and Rescue Advisory Committee.**

1 (a) There is created the West Virginia K9 Search and Rescue Advisory Committee to  
2 standardize state policies, practices, and training for K9 Search and Rescue teams.

3 (b) The West Virginia K9 Search and Rescue Advisory Committee consists of the following  
4 members:

5 (1) One individual from the West Virginia State Police;

6 (2) The West Virginia Search and Rescue ("SAR") Coordinator;

7 (3) One individual from the Department of Natural Resources;

8 (4) One individual from the West Virginia Sheriff's Association;

9 (5) One individual from the West Virginia Fire Marshall's Office;

10 (6) Two individuals from the West Virginia Legislature, with one from the West Virginia  
11 Senate and one from the House of Delegates;

12 (7) Six individuals who are active members of a West Virginia SAR teams, and who hold an  
13 individual national SAR certification, and have achieved a minimum rank of SAR Technician, Level  
14 2;

15 (8) One individual from the West Virginia National Guard; and

16 (9) One individual from the West Virginia Civil Air Patrol.

17 (c) No member of the advisory committee shall be compensated. The West Virginia State  
18 Police shall finance any costs of committee meetings with existing funds.

19 (d) The members of the advisory committee shall select the chairperson and vice  
20 chairperson who shall serve in their role for up to two consecutive years. The advisory committee

21 shall hold its first meeting not later than 30 days after the appointment of its members. For  
22 purposes of the first meeting, the indivial members from West Virginia State Police or his/her  
23 designee shall call and preside over the first meeting until a chair is selected. Thereafter, the  
24 committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson at least once per quarter. Additional meetings  
25 shall be held as set forth in the bylaws.

26 (e) The Superintendent of the West Virginia State Police, at his or her discretion, may  
27 provide the advisory committee with administrative support reasonably necessary for the advisory  
28 committee to carry out its duties. In addition, the superintendent may make and sign any  
29 agreements and may do and perform any acts that are necessary to receive, accept, or secure  
30 gifts, grants, and bequests of funds in the name of the advisory committee.

31 (f) The West Virginia K9 Search and Rescue Advisory Committee may:

32 (1) Examine the state needs for K9 Search and Rescue teams and services;

33 (2) Review state and national policies and practices for K9 Search and Rescue teams; and

34 (3) Shall consider and make findings and recommendations on all policies, training and  
35 potential improvements for K9 Search and Rescue teams.

36 (g) No later than 18 months following the appointment of the advisory committee, the  
37 committee shall submit a report to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. By December 1 of each  
38 year, the advisory committee shall submit to the Governor and the Joint Committee on the  
39 Judiciary an annual report on the status of implementation of this section of the code. The advisory  
40 committee shall recommend in its annual report any other issues the committee deems necessary  
41 and relevant to address that relate to the K9 Search and Rescue teams and services in the state.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create the West Virginia K9 Search and Rescue Advisory Committee.

Strike-throughs language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.