



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### CONTACT

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## **ILETSB to Develop Certification Program for Law Enforcement Therapy Dog Teams** *Putting Our Best Paw Forward to Support Illinois Communities*

**SPRINGFIELD, IL** – Today, the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB) is pleased to announce the passage of Senate Bill 1491, a new law that will enhance crisis and emergency response capabilities across the state through the integration of certified therapy dog teams. Senate Bill 1491 was recently signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker on Friday, August 1, 2025.

Effective January 1, 2026, Senate Bill 1491 requires ILETSB to develop a comprehensive course and certification program for law enforcement officers who will work with therapy dogs in crisis and emergency response situations. This initiative aims to ensure that trained therapy dog teams are available to provide comfort and support during critical incidents, benefiting both individuals in crisis and responding officers. This program will allow for a mutual aid network of therapy dog teams to be dispersed throughout the state when they are needed the most.

“This is a significant moment for communities across Illinois,” said **Jennifer Wooldridge, the state CIT coordinator and K-9 handler of 'Trooper' from the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board**. “Now more than ever, our communities need this support. The ability for people to express their grief and relieve their stress in the presence of these wonderful K-9s is truly impactful.”

This new program will build upon existing crisis intervention team training efforts, providing additional valuable resources for law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. ILETSB will be working diligently to establish the curriculum and certification standards, and further details regarding the program development and rollout will be shared on the website in the coming months.

“Therapy dogs have the ability to help reduce stress-induced trauma, bringing instant comfort and relief,” said **Sen. Mary Edly-Allen (D-Libertyville)**. “This law will improve officer wellness and make certified therapy K-9s more accessible to help those in a time of need.”

Following the passage of Senate Bill 1491, ILETSB will develop a course and certification program for law enforcement therapy dog teams. ILETSB will emphasize the use of therapy dogs with crisis and emergency response. Furthermore, our board will aim to ensure that certified K-9 teams are available in various regions throughout the state.

For more information and future updates on the development of the certified therapy dog team program, please visit the ILETSB website at [ptb.illinois.gov](http://ptb.illinois.gov)



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### ***About ILETSB***

*The Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board is the state agency mandated to promote and maintain a high level of professional standards for law enforcement, correctional, and court security officers. Its purpose is to promote and protect citizen health, safety, and welfare by assisting municipalities, counties, special districts, universities, colleges, and other local governmental agencies of this state in their efforts to upgrade and maintain a high level of training and standards for law enforcement personnel.*