§ 2583. Military animals: transfer and adoption

(a) Availability for Adoption.— The Secretary of the military department concerned may make a military animal of such military department available for adoption by a person or entity referred to in subsection (c), unless the animal has been determined to be unsuitable for adoption under subsection (b), under circumstances as follows:

(1) At the end of the animal’s useful life.

(2) Before the end of the animal’s useful life, if such Secretary, in such Secretary’s discretion, determines that unusual or extraordinary circumstances, including circumstances under which the handler of a military working dog is killed in action, dies of wounds received in action, or is medically retired as a result of injuries received in action, justify making the animal available for adoption before that time.

(3) When the animal is otherwise excess to the needs of such military department.

(b) Suitability for Adoption.— The decision whether a particular military animal is suitable or unsuitable for adoption under this section shall be made by the commander of the last unit to which the animal is assigned before being declared excess. The unit commander shall consider the recommendations of the unit’s veterinarian in making the decision regarding the adoptability of the animal.

(c) Authorized Recipients.— Military animals may be adopted under this section by law enforcement agencies, former handlers of these animals, and other persons capable of humanely caring for these animals. If the Secretary of the military department concerned determines that an adoption is justified under subsection (a)(2) under circumstances under which the handler of a military working dog is wounded in action, the dog may be made available for adoption only by the handler. If the Secretary of the military department concerned determines that such an adoption is justified under circumstances under which the handler of a military working dog is killed in action or dies of wounds received in action, the military working dog shall be made available for adoption only by a parent, child, spouse, or sibling of the deceased handler.

(d) Consideration.— The transfer of a military animal under this section may be without charge to the recipient.

(e) Limitations on Liability for Transferred Animals.—

(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the United States shall not be subject to any suit, claim, demand or action, liability, judgment, cost, or other fee arising out of any claim for personal injury or property damage (including death, illness, or loss of or damage to property or other economic loss) that results from, or is in any manner predicated upon, the act or omission of a former military animal transferred under this section, including any training provided to the animal while a military animal.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the United States shall not be liable for any veterinary expense associated with a military animal transferred under this section for a condition of the military animal before transfer under this section, whether or not such condition is known at the time of transfer under this section.

(f) Military Animal Defined.— In this section, the term “military animal” means the following:

(1) A military working dog.

(2) A horse owned by the Department of Defense.
Amendments

2011—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 112–81, § 351(1), inserted “, including circumstances under which the handler of a military working dog is killed in action, dies of wounds received in action, or is medically retired as a result of injuries received in action,” after “extraordinary circumstances”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 112–81, § 351(2), inserted at end “If the Secretary of the military department concerned determines that an adoption is justified under subsection (a)(2) under circumstances under which the handler of a military working dog is wounded in action, the dog may be made available for adoption only by the handler. If the Secretary of the military department concerned determines that such an adoption is justified under circumstances under which the handler of a military working dog is killed in action or dies of wounds received in action, the military working dog shall be made available for adoption only by a parent, child, spouse, or sibling of the deceased handler.”.

Subsecs. (f), (g). Pub. L. 112–81, § 1061(20), redesignated subsec. (g) as (f) and struck out former subsec. (f). Prior to amendment, text of subsec. (f) read as follows: “The Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress an annual report specifying the number of military animals adopted under this section during the preceding year, the number of these animals currently awaiting adoption, and the number of these animals euthanized during the preceding year. With respect to each euthanized military animal, the report shall contain an explanation of the reasons why the animal was euthanized rather than retained for adoption under this section.”


Pub. L. 109–163, § 599(d), struck out “at end of useful working life” after “adoption” in section catchline.

Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 109–364, § 352(a)(2)–(4), substituted “animal’s” for “dog’s” in pars. (1) and (2) and “animal” for “dog” wherever appearing, and struck out “working” after “may make a military” in introductory provisions and after “useful” in pars. (1) and (2).

Pub. L. 109–163, § 599(a), (b), substituted “Secretary of the military department concerned may” for “Secretary of Defense may”, “such military department” for “the Department of Defense”, and “. unless the dog has been determined to be unsuitable for adoption under subsection (b), under circumstances as follows:” and pars. (1) to (3) for “at the end of the dog’s useful working life or when the dog is otherwise excess to the needs of the Department, unless the dog has been determined to be unsuitable for adoption under subsection (b).”

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 109–364, § 352(a)(2), (3), (5), substituted “the adoptability of the animal” for “a dog’s adoptability” and “animal” for “dog” in two places and struck out “working” after “military”.


Pub. L. 109–163, § 599(c), inserted “of Defense” after “Secretary”.


2001—Pub. L. 107–107 renumbered section 2582 of this title as this section.