

# Massachusetts Governor Baker signs Nero's Law, bill creates new protections for K9 officers

Today, Governor Charlie Baker signed legislation filed by Senator Mark Montigny (D-New Bedford) to create new protections for K9 law enforcement officers. Montigny filed the bill in response to the tragic event on April 12, 2018, that took the life of New Bedford-native Sergeant Sean Gannon. His fearless K9 partner Nero was also severely injured, requiring significant medical attention.

Despite the multiple empty ambulances on site, Nero had to be rushed to the animal hospital in the back of a police cruiser. Fortunately, Nero was able to survive his injuries, but the inability to transport him shows callousness in our laws towards working dogs who risk their lives every day to serve our commonwealth.

S2573, An Act allowing humane transportation of K9 partners aka Nero's law, authorizes emergency medical service personnel to provide emergency treatment and transport K9 officers. This includes basic first aid, CPR, and administering life-saving interventions such as naloxone. The Senate passed Montigny's bill in November 2021, and the House similarly engrossed earlier this month.

"This law will ensure the wellbeing of working dogs who risk their lives every day to keep us safe," said Senator Montigny. "I hope this provides some comfort to the Gannon family who fought tirelessly for this moment that will forever honor Sean and his fearless partner Nero. I also want to thank Governor Baker for his strong support. We look forward to joining with

him to celebrate this special moment.”

S2573 was originally filed by Montigny in 2019 and received favorable reports this session from the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security, Chaired by Senator Walter Timilty, and the Senate Committee on Ways and Means , Chaired by Senator Michael Rodrigues. First-term Representative Steven Xiarhos also filed Montigny’s language this session in the House. Governor Baker signed the bill earlier today. A bill signing ceremony is expected in the coming weeks.