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Testimony on the Act Concerning an Appropriation to Provide Assistance to Schools of
Veterinary Medicine

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on the importance of gaining grant funds to assist Connecticut residents interested in pursuing a degree in veterinary medicine. My name is Chelsea Anderson and I live in the town of Madison. Next May I will be graduating from the University of Connecticut, with a degree in Animal Science and a minor in Wildlife Conservation from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. From as far back as I can remember, I knew that I wanted to be a vet. My passion for veterinary medicine led me to volunteer at High Hopes Therapeutic Riding Center while in high school, to conduct research for Yale University working with non-human primates, and to work at the Connecticut Humane Society in the medical care department. I will also travel across the world to South Africa to participate in an African Ecology program this coming May. Well aware of the intense competition I will face as an out-of-state student when applying to vet school, I have worked extremely hard to achieve academic excellence in some of the most rigorous courses offered at the University of Connecticut. Over the past 3 years at UConn I have succeeded in maintaining a grade point average of 3.69 out of a 4.0 scale. Yet I know when I begin applying to veterinary schools this fall, I will face an uphill battle of trying to be admitted as an out-of-state resident.

As a Connecticut resident, I am at a definite disadvantage when applying to veterinary schools. At this time, the state of Connecticut does not have a veterinary school. Therefore no matter where I apply, I am considered an out-of-state applicant. With this out-of-state status, I am automatically placed in a pool of applicants from all over the country. The average veterinary school class size is between 80 and 100 students. Vet schools are committed to reserving at least half the class slots for state residents. Therefore, I am competing with thousands of well-qualified students for roughly 40 potential openings. The contract grant with Iowa State last year reserved five

class slots specifically for Connecticut residents, giving them a greater advantage for consideration of acceptance into the veterinary program.

Unfortunately with the economic crisis our country is enduring, budget cuts are being forced in areas that most need the help. The in-state tuition that our previous contract with Iowa State promised is a financial opportunity Connecticut residents have nowhere else, especially during these times. After all, as an out-of-state resident, the average cost of tuition to attend veterinary school for four years is approximately \$150,000. With the contract, the overall cost of tuition would be \$70,000, creating a difference of \$80,000 in tuition alone. In my case, as in many others, I will be independently financing my education and a grant such as this would substantially help decrease my overall indebtedness. However, the most important aspect of this contract is the access gained that gives Connecticut residents a competitive advantage in the application process since we are treated as in-state students. Without this in-state treatment, Connecticut residents are at an unfair disadvantage when applying to veterinary schools. I find it particularly frustrating that had I chosen to follow medicine, dentistry, or law, this would not be an issue as Connecticut has these professional schools. However, because I chose to pursue veterinary medicine, I am not given the same advantage that in-state students have when applying to their own veterinary school.

Being born and raised in Connecticut, I plan to return to my home state as a veterinary practitioner following graduation from veterinary school. A contract such as the previous one with Iowa State can allow Connecticut residents to turn their dreams into a reality. I sincerely thank you for your time and hope that this incredible opportunity is considered to ensure Connecticut students the chance to have an equal opportunity when applying to vet school.