

TO: Members of the CGA Higher Education Committee
FROM: Lindsay Fitzgerald
DATE: February 10, 2009
RE: HB 6293

My name is Lindsay Fitzgerald and I am one of the five students that received a contract position at Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine. I was hoping to encourage your support for the bill number 6292, regarding veterinary medicine education. Veterinary medicine is an ever expanding field that is vitally important. Not only is it important in helping to improve the quality of life of pets, which in turn helps their owners, but is also at the forefront of helping to identify and control infectious diseases that can be passed from animals to people. Veterinarians are also vital to pharmaceutical research, of which there are a few labs in Connecticut. Therefore, the veterinary industry is important to both pet owners and non-pet owners alike.

Students from Connecticut are at a huge disadvantage when it comes to attending veterinary school, as there are none in the state. There are only 27 in the entire country, with a total of around 2500 seats. Less than half of those seats are reserved for out of state students, making it extremely difficult for students to get into school. For one veterinary school, the acceptance to applicant ratio for out of state students is 1:33. An additional 20 states have contracts with veterinary schools, making it 47 states that either have a school or a contract agreement.

The contract is an amazing opportunity for CT residents, as it would reserve five spots each year for CT residents. Additionally, Iowa State admitted many more CT applicants because of the contract, with my freshman year having 12 students from CT attending. In contrast, there is only 1 student from CT in the year above me, when there was no contract. Many of these students, including myself, are planning on coming back to CT to practice veterinary medicine. This will be a great asset to the state, as there is currently a shortage, especially in food animal and exotic medicine. Continuing this contract will enable more students to be able to obtain their veterinary degree, and come back to CT to practice.

Additionally, while not the most important part of it, the financial benefit is helpful, as the cost of school for an out of state veterinary student is extremely expensive. Tuition alone is \$160,000, and once the cost of living is factored in, that number rises to \$200,000. There are little to no scholarship opportunities, and very little time outside of class for a job.

I hope you will please consider supporting this important bill. Being a contract student this year has been an amazing opportunity for me, and I hope future students will have that privilege as well.

Thank you for your time,
Lindsay Fitzgerald