



February 21, 2012

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony (Governor's Bill No. 28) in support of restoring the appropriation to provide Connecticut residents access to schools of veterinary medicine. The Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association greatly appreciates the legislature's past support for veterinary education for Connecticut residents and we ask that you keep this funding intact. The University of Connecticut, in agreement with the Connecticut Department of Higher Education, competitively negotiated bids from veterinary schools for seats for Connecticut residents and Iowa State University was selected. This is a very popular program and it has gone a long way to help Connecticut residents pursue a career in veterinary medicine otherwise unavailable within our borders. This program allows for 5 Connecticut residents to be considered as instate applicants when they apply to Iowa State University School of Veterinary Medicine each year. As you know, prior to this agreement we were one of just 3 states without a veterinary school or contracted seats. The difficulty this poses is illustrated by Colorado State's Veterinary School where acceptance to applicant ratios are 1:3 for residents, 1:4 for contract seats, and 1:33 for out of state applicants. This law has truly improved the opportunities for our residents to pursue this career and there is little question we need them to do so.

Estimates of the number of veterinarians needed in the future show that certain areas are short of young entry level veterinarians. Particularly in the areas of public health, food safety, infectious disease research, homeland security and other areas of government service, areas that affect human health and safety, the need is well known.

In Connecticut a 2007 survey by the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association indicated that 37% of practicing veterinarians were planning to retire by 2017 and 55% by 2022. Further, veterinary employers reported an average time to fill a position in excess of 1 year. Clearly Connecticut will have a need for veterinary services to address ongoing attrition well into the future.

Another factor to consider is that veterinary students who establish permanent residency in other states to maximize their chances of acceptance into veterinary school often do not return. The cost of out of state tuition results in loans in excess of \$150,000 for these students after 4 years of education. Therefore they are less likely to return to a state with

a perceived high cost of living. These contacted seats give us a greater likelihood of retaining these veterinarians as they need not sacrifice their Connecticut residency status.

We strongly urge you to support continued access to veterinary medical education for Connecticut residents and restore funding to the Kirklyn Kerr program. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Eva Ceranowicz DVM

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Co-Chairs, Government Affairs Committee

Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association