

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 32

(Senator Reilly)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

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**Agriculture - Practice of Veterinary Medicine - Exclusions**

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This bill allows a farrier or a person actively engaged in the art or profession of horseshoeing to trim and maintain horse hooves without being considered to be practicing veterinary medicine. Under current law, individuals practicing veterinary medicine are required to be licensed.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2011.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill does not directly affect State operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal overall impact; however, the bill may have a meaningful impact on a given small business to the extent it provides assurance that an owner or employee may trim and maintain horse hooves without being considered to be practicing veterinary medicine in violation of State law.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** A farrier or a person actively engaged in the art or profession of horseshoeing is not considered to be practicing veterinary medicine as long as his or her actions are limited to the art of horseshoeing only. A person may not practice veterinary medicine unless he or she is licensed, registered, and authorized to engage in the practice under State law.

**Background:** A common definition of a farrier is a person who shoes horses, but a farrier may also routinely treat minor hoof medical conditions such as infections, bruises, and abscesses. Horseshoeing includes trimming of a horse's hooves. Some horse owners, however, do not shoe their horses, but the horse hooves still require trimming and maintenance.

The American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) Model Veterinary Practice Act has a similar exemption to the current exemption in Maryland law (exempting "any person lawfully engaged in the art or profession of horseshoeing"). AVMA indicates that at least a small number of states also have exemptions for farriery or horseshoeing/trimming hooves.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Agriculture (State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners), American Veterinary Medical Association, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 21, 2011  
mc/lgc

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