



RE: HB 1388
Position: In Favor

Please support HB 1388 to prohibit non-compete agreements in health care and veterinary professions.

I am a business owner in Anne Arundel County and a recent issue has come to my attention which negatively affects my ability to do business within the county – a non-compete agreement. I run a horse training, sales, lesson business located in Owings. We compete at some of the highest levels of the sport. Upon starting my business in Anne Arundel County, I sought out the services of a particular veterinarian with a specialty in sports medicine who traveled from out of state to see my horses – filling a void in the local veterinary community. Fortunately, this veterinarian then joined a local practice, we now had specialized sports medicine and thanks to her husband surgical services (including emergency) as well in Anne Arundel County. Our local veterinarians are a fantastic group but they do not have the manpower to adequately service the large number of horses in our area. Nor do they have the specialized skill set for sports medicine or emergency surgery. I have found myself routinely driving out of the county and state to get the medical attention my horses need.

Did you know the Maryland Horse Breeders Association estimates that there are 101,000 horses in Maryland. That's 10.5 horses per square mile, a number that is HIGHER than any other state in the nation. In reviewing the American Association of Equine Practitioners website there are 81 registered equine practitioners in Maryland. That means those 81 vets are each responsible for caring for 1,247 horses. Non-compete agreements only make that number exponentially higher. We currently do not have enough veterinarians to properly care for our horses and it's time to remove the non-compete agreement for veterinarians and all health care professionals.

It is my right and responsibility to choose who cares for my animals. The doctor-patient relationship is exactly that, a relationship between myself and the veterinarian of my choosing. The use of a non-compete clause by a practice or business forces me into a contract that I did not even know about, and has a significantly negative impact on animal welfare in the area.

Please consider the following facts:

1. The veterinary shortage is well-known and documented. The AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association) acknowledges shortages of veterinarians in rural America, food animal, equine, academia, shelters, emergency practices, specialties, and public health areas. The AAEP (American Association of Equine Practitioners) data shows that only 1.3% of graduating veterinarians go into equine practice, 50% of those individuals leave the profession within 5 years, either switching to small animal practice or quitting veterinary medicine altogether. The Mars Veterinary Health Study (2022) predicts a shortage of over 15,000 veterinarians by 2030.
2. Several states have recognized that non-compete agreements violate the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship similar to how the American Bar Association prohibits non-compete agreements because they violate the attorney-client relationship. California, Oklahoma, North Dakota have



banned non-compete agreements across professions. Connecticut, Florida, Indiana have specifically banned non-compete clauses for physicians, and Maine has banned non-compete clauses for veterinarians.

Non-compete agreements can be deemed unenforceable when they violate the public interest or public policy. This particular non-compete agreement is not only restricting the public's access to specialty veterinary care, but also hurting many businesses in the county. As a horse owner, I should have the right to have the veterinarian of my choosing treat my horses and as a business owner I should have the right to utilize the vendors I need for continued success.

Please vote for the elimination of non-compete agreements in the veterinary profession (HB 1388). Thank you for your service to our community and for hearing my concerns.

Sincerely,

Sue Chambers
Owner/Founder
Quinn Haven Stables