

Matthew Weeman DVM, MS

Position: Favorable with Amendments HB325

I'm writing today to suggest a position of "favorable with amendments on HB325. As the food animal representative, board member and legislative committee chair for the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association as well as a concerned veterinarian within the state of Maryland regarding HB325. My practice area includes all Maryland counties with the exception of Garret, Allegany, Washington. Licensed veterinarians within Maryland are required to take 18 continuing education hours per annum to maintain their license in good standing. There are only 11 states that require more total hours and many don't require those hours to be renewed annually. The Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners within the state of Maryland has complete oversight of licensure. Their only method of recourse to limit the inappropriate practice of medicine or to rein in bad actors/bad veterinarians is to revoke or refuse licensure within the state. The Maryland Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners has no authority to reprimand a veterinarian without a Maryland License.

Allowing veterinarians from any state to practice within Maryland (as this bill would do) will make it effectively impossible to enforce the Maryland practice act. Furthermore, it virtually negates the need for a Maryland veterinary license. I practice in Delaware and in Maryland, I presently maintain both licenses and if this bill became law, in many ways, holding a Maryland veterinary license would present unnecessary liability to me professionally. There would be absolutely no reason for me to continue to maintain professional licensure within the state of Maryland. I would save \$150.00 per year and get to take 6 less continuing education hours per year if I chose to do so. I'd also be subjected to less oversight. It is relatively easy to obtain a Maryland Veterinary license for \$150.00 and if the veterinarian requesting it has adhered to the exemplary standards of the Maryland Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners and has a proven record of safety and professionalism it will not be denied. One requirement to practice safely is to educate oneself continuously to maintain an appropriate standard of care; 18 hours is hardly restrictive. The Maryland Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners reviews applications for licensure in a very timely manner preventing unnecessary delays.

Our Maryland licensing board can safeguard the public by refusing licensure to bad actors that may attempt to move to our state after facing board complaints or censorship against their licensure in another state or jurisdiction. Taking this unprecedented step to effectively neutralize the ability of the Maryland Board of Veterinary Examiners to regulate veterinarians who may be practicing within the state is dangerous and it does nothing to address a perceived veterinary shortage. Shelter animals or those owned by citizens of our state who require financial assistance are still important and worthy of quality veterinary care. They should not be subjected to services rendered by an unchecked, unregulated veterinarian as a matter of convenience. Creating financial incentives to support those services would be a far better legislative initiative.

If someone who desires to practice veterinary medicine within the state of Maryland is restricted from doing so because of a \$150.00 registration fee it would be more prudent of the state legislature to mandate a less restrictive fee. The Maryland Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners has an excellent track record of regulating medicine within our state, punishing bad behavior and it will restrict licensure *only* when an individual applying for it has demonstrated a prior disregard for the safe practice of veterinary medicine. Put simply, if a veterinarian wishes to operate within Maryland and they are unable

to receive a license to practice within Maryland it is for good reason. Removing the regulatory guardrails that prevent poor quality medicine while allowing veterinarians to operate within our state with impunity would be a dire mis-step.

In consultation with the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners and Maryland Department of Health changing regulations to allow Registered Veterinary Technicians to administer rabies vaccinations under direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian could be considered to provide for the expeditious and effective management of the state's rabies prevention programs but amendments should be made to remove all other requested provisions in the bill as written.

Matthew Weeman DVM, MS, PAS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Weeman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greensboro, Md