



March 5, 2024

House Bill 1388

**Labor and Employment – Noncompete and Conflict of Interest Clauses – Veterinary and
Health Care Professionals
House Health and Government Operations Committee**

I write in strong support of HB 1388.

While it is common knowledge that noncompete clauses in employment contracts are being banned in some states because they sever long standing relationships between doctors and their patients, the crisis that these clauses create in large animal veterinary practice is less known.

Maryland has more horses per square mile than any state in the nation, but very few equine veterinarians. In Anne Arundel County we have close to 5,000 horses on a thousand properties, but only six veterinarians to care for them. Of those six, two are banned from practice in the area by a former employer, and one of those two is the only board-certified surgeon.

We've been here before in our county. At least a dozen equine veterinarians came here to work in practices that required non-compete contracts and were later forced out of the area. That's bad for the largest sector of our agriculture industry, and it's inhumane to the animals needing care.

We can't make more people choose the lower pay and longer hours of large animal medicine when they graduate from vet school, but we can give the ones who do make that choice the dignity of practicing in the areas where they are needed and are known.

The movement to ban non competes in both human health care and veterinary medicine is growing fast across the country, driven by workforce shortages and a basic belief that individual businesses should not have the right to ban competition.

The American Medical Association Principles of Medical Ethics specifically discourages the use of noncompete clauses in employment contracts. Maryland bans non competes already in the profession of law.

I ask that the committee give this bill a favorable report.

Stuart Pittman
County Executive