



Maryland Veterinary Medical Association (MDVMA)

Established in 1886, MDVMA is a volunteer, non-profit organization comprised primarily of licensed Maryland Veterinarians.

HB0643 - Higher Education - Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Eligibility

Committee: Appropriations

February 14, 2025

MDVMA Position: SUPPORT

On behalf of the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association (MdVMA) and its members, I am writing to strongly urge your favorable review and support of House Bill 643 (HB643). This bill presents an important opportunity to provide much-needed support to veterinary professionals who, much like those working in human medicine, play a vital role in the health and well-being of our communities.

As you may be aware, veterinarians and veterinary technicians are crucial to maintaining the overall health of both animals and the public. However, despite their critical role to preserving the integrity of our state's food production systems as well as the prevention and containment of important zoonotic diseases—such as highly pathogenic avian influenza, these professionals often face significant financial challenges. The cost of a veterinary education is equitable to that of human physicians. The duration of the education required is equitable as well. The veterinary profession is notoriously underpaid in comparison to human healthcare professionals, which leads to high levels of burnout, lower levels of recruitment, and retention issues within our profession.

Supporting our profession through funding initiatives such as HB643 is an important step toward addressing these disparities and is possible without the addition of funds from the state budget. This tuition reimbursement program will be especially important in assisting the state to maintain a high level of veterinary professionals within the state and in return for the financial support, the commitment these individuals make to serve within the state will help to ameliorate the shortage of veterinarians and veterinary support staff within the state and in our shelter organizations.

On behalf of the MdVMA and our dedicated members, I respectfully ask for your favorable report on HB643. We are confident that with your support, we can enhance the sustainability and vitality of the veterinary profession in Maryland and ensure the continued delivery of quality care for animals and their owners.

Thank you for your time, attention, and ongoing commitment to the well-being of all Maryland residents.

Sincerely,
Matthew Weeman, DVM, MS
Legislative Committee Chair
Maryland Veterinary Medical Association

MARYLAND VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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