

MICHELE GUYTON
Legislative District 42B
Baltimore County

Environment and Transportation
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 304
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3793 · 301-858-3793
800-492-7122 Ext. 3793
Michele.Guyton@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 18, 2025

Favorable

HB 643 – Higher Education - Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program - Eligibility

Dear Chairman Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I respectfully ask your consideration of HB 643 to extend the eligibility for the Janet L. Hoffman Loan Assistance Repayment Program to include individuals who received a veterinary or veterinary technician degree from an accredited Maryland institution of higher learning. Applicants would provide veterinary or vet tech services in the State for no less than 5 years OR provide volunteer veterinary or vet tech services at certain animal shelters.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, one in three students graduating in 2023 had an educational debt greater than \$200,000. This number has continuously increased with the amount of educational debt relentlessly increasing, combined with the spiraling costs of veterinary medical education. The Hoffman Loan Assistance Program is appropriated in 2026, \$4.12 million dollars. However, only \$511,222 was awarded to applicants so this bill would not have any effect on the health of this Program.

To address a serious shortage among veterinary professionals we have invested in a new University of Maryland Eastern Shore's Veterinary Doctorate Program that is opening in 2026. This bill is a fiscally responsible proposal that utilizes an existing program to streamline the administrative costs of becoming and serving as a veterinarian or vet tech.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 643.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Delegate Michele Guyton".

Delegate Michele Guyton