

Good Afternoon,

My name is Jennifer Dawson. I am both a Clinical Social Worker and an animal owner, and I am here to ask for your consideration in the passing of the HB1388 bill.

As a practitioner, I've seen firsthand how stressed and overworked healthcare professionals are and work environments can play a major part of that. There are many reasons why people leave their jobs. Location, opportunities for growth, family, lifestyle, changes, and toxic work environments. Having a noncompete in the healthcare industry only adds to that heavy burden as they place a variety of restrictions both on the provider and the patient. These can include a parameter of distance where they can practice in the future, along with time requirements . This now causes an employee to be forced to take more time away from their families if they have to travel further and forcing them to sever relationships with the clientele they've built up and treated for years.

There is a place for non-competes certainly, but when you're working in healthcare with both humans and animals, it is very individualized, and our craft is our brains with creative planning and our hands, and how we work to treat our clients.

If a business or organization is running a moral and ethical standard of care, there's no reason to feel threatened by employees by leaving and maybe starting their own practice. I have experienced this and personally it is nice to be able to

collaborate with other clinicians that have different specialties. Noncompetes force people to stay, which becomes more about the business practice, and not about the quality of care that you are providing to people or animals.

As a horse owner, I've had my own ordeal due to a non-compete. My 24-year old horse was in the midst of bi-monthly chemotherapy treatments for a sinus tumor and learned that his longtime vet had to leave his practice, and was no longer able to see patients within 30 miles of his former clinic. For me, the clock was suddenly ticking as I tried and failed to find vets in our area who could provide this specific treatment. When I finally did, it took a month to get in, and an hour away, I had to start my horse's treatments all over again because of the delay caused by a non-compete. These are not animals you can put in the back of your car. I don't have my own trailer so this was expensive,time-consuming, and enormously stressful. Currently, the state of Maryland has four board-certified equine surgeons. Any emergencies now have to travel out of state to either New Bolton , Pennsylvania, or Leesburg, Virginia. Maryland is home to over 100,000 horses and this noncompete is putting our animals' lives at risk as we now travel out of state for medical surgical emergencies. This would be devastating to any animal owner.

Non-competes also have a devastating potential impact on my *own* career and clientele. As a Clinical Social Worker, signing a

noncompete means that if I have to leave my practice and adhere to a distance perimeter, patients that wish to continue with me, now have to travel further. We can all agree life is busy and simple conveniences, such as distance for our providers of care, are factors we take into consideration. With the shortage of medical practitioners, non competes also restricts them from an interest in the industry.

As mentioned earlier, the choice to leave our workplace comes from a variety of reasons. Clients that come to therapy have a variety of needs. So how do I tell a trauma patient, or a suicidal patient that has been under my care for that they're not going to have access to me, unless they choose to travel 30 miles away? Being forced to start up with a new provider is both disruptive and overwhelming. We hear in the news all the time, the mental health crisis, and the lack of access to mental health. If non-competes were terminated in the healthcare sector, perhaps access would be more easily available. I believe Non-competes only cause harm in healthcare, and undue hardships for practitioners, and should not exist in any aspect of the medical community. So I ask you to please take this into consideration in passing this bill for medical providers both in the healthcare sector and veterinarian care sector.

Thank you.

Jennifer Dawson MSW, LGSW