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March 25, 2024

Dear Sirs,

I want to register my opposition to SB1182. **HB1388**

I am writing to explain my opposition to this bill that removes non-compete parameters from employee contracts.

I am a 1986 graduate and own an equine exclusive ambulatory practice in Maryland. I have hired eight different associates, so I am familiar with non-compete dynamics.

If an associate is brought into a veterinary practice and that associate is properly mentored, nurtured, and promoted by the practice, the associate benefits from this promotion above and beyond what would have happened without the promotion from the employer. The employer endorsement gives the employee veterinarian an unfair advantage to compete with other veterinarians and their former employer because of that endorsement.

Associate veterinarians without a non-compete employment contract who plan to leave their position may be incentivized to speak negatively about their practice and other employees, and maybe incentivized to act in a manner not consistent with practice policy. This can be harmful to the employer, other practice employees, clients and patients.

Practice owners, such as myself, struggle to find and to keep quality associates. An associate who has left a practice and stays within the local market and who poach clientele make it difficult, if not impossible, to want to afford to hire another associate. The lack of collegial atmosphere within the local market is equally harmful to all involved.

A non-compete clause within an employee contract should be reasonable in its scope and restrictions. When properly executed and properly explained to the employee, everyone benefits.

Bill 1388 is too broad and overreaching in its scope. The bill lacks definition. Its retroactive application is not well thought out. The veterinary community has not had an opportunity to review or to consider this important and impactful legislation and indeed, veterinarians should be consulted and surveyed before this bill is put forward. I am opposed.

Sincerely,

Rachel Blakey, VMD, MPH, DACVPM
Maryland Equine Center, Inc.