

Respected Delegate,

Please support HB 1388 to prohibit non-compete agreements in health care and veterinary professions.

I am a Maryland horse owner at 11305 Riverview Road, Fort Washington, MD 20744 that is being harmed by the use of non-compete agreements in veterinary employment contracts. My horses are, right now, without veterinary care. My veterinarian had to leave the practice and cannot care for my animals at my farm due to a non-compete clause. I live too close to the practice. So, god-forbid, if one of my horses gets sick or injured, I will have to call around to local equine veterinarians and beg them to help me. Without a prior relationship, the chances of someone helping me in the middle of the night is very low, as they are already overworked. My other option is to load my suffering horse in a trailer to drive outside the area restricted by the non-compete for my trusted veterinarian, who will also need to drive about an hour for my horse to get care. Having my trusted veterinarian unable to treat my horses, after years of dedicated service, is simply unbearable.

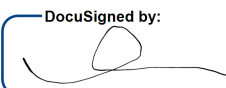
It is my right and responsibility to choose who cares for my animals. The doctor-patient relationship is exactly that, a relationship between me and the veterinarian of my choosing. The use of a non-compete clause by a practice or business forces me into a contract that I didn't even know about, and has a significantly negative impact on animal welfare in the area.

1. The veterinary shortage is well-known and documented. The AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association) acknowledges shortages of veterinarians in rural America, food animal, equine, academia, shelters, emergency practices, specialties, and public health areas. The AAEP (American Association of Equine Practitioners) data shows that only 1.3% of graduating veterinarians go into equine practice, 50% of those individuals leave the profession within 5 years, either switching to small animal practice or quitting veterinary medicine altogether. The Mars Veterinary Health Study (2022) predicts a shortage of over 15,000 veterinarians by 2030.

2. Several states have recognized that non-competes violate the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship similar to how the American Bar Association prohibits non-compete agreements because they violate the attorney-client relationship. California, Oklahoma, North Dakota have banned non-compete agreements across professions. Connecticut, Florida, Indiana have specifically banned non-compete clauses for physicians, and Maine has banned non-compete clauses for veterinarians.

Thank you for your service to our community, for hearing my concerns, and, ultimately, for supporting the elimination of non-compete agreements in the veterinary profession (HB 1388).

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Amiya Veatch

Maryland resident and horse owner

3/4/2024