

Submitter: Sabrina Cooper
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB976

To whom it may concern regarding Oregon's S.B. 976, legalizing veterinary dentistry by unlicensed individuals in the state of OR:

A big argument I have seen from people wishing for this bill to pass is the lack of veterinarians in their area making routine care for their horses difficult to come by, so they wish for different options. Though I respect that it is not always easy to find a veterinarian, S.B. 976 will not aid in this issue. In fact, passing S.B. 976 WILL decrease the number of equine veterinarians willing to practice in Oregon, making it even more difficult to get care for resident's equine companions.

As someone who receives a major portion of their income from performing routine equine dentistry, passage of this bill will have a negative impact on my income. It will additionally have a negative effect on the income of other veterinarians throughout the state of OR. Both short and long term, this will only continue to drive equine veterinarians out of the profession, decreasing availability for routine and emergency veterinary medical care for the horses we all love so much. The financial and emotional implications of passing a bill like this is guaranteed to take a toll on both our mental health and wellbeing as individuals in a profession where the suicide rate is already 10x that of the general population.

Another argument I have seen surrounds the cost of services from licensed veterinarians vs. equine dentists. When I have compared the services side by side when I have worked in states where it was legal to perform dentistry under supervision of a veterinarian, the cost differences have been negligible. Additionally, when paying for the services of a veterinarian they have the ability to evaluate the horse as a whole, identifying potential health issues and prescribing appropriate medications when needed through a legitimate veterinarian-client-patient-relationship.

This bill would not change the fact that it is illegal for non-veterinarians to sedate horses and perform surgeries, which tooth extraction falls under. In all of the states that have a measure liked this legalized, dentists are performing these portions of dental care illegally, obtaining and dispensing drugs without license or oversight. This bill would not change that if there were complications to arise, equine dentists do not have an overarching governing body to oversee quality of practice and care. There is no oversight of trainees once out in the world. There is not requirements for continuing education.

This bill would not change the fact that horse owners are lied to when they are told equine veterinarians have very little training in dentistry. I personally have spent countless hours training specifically in equine dentistry and dental procedures between time in school, specialized training in my internship, years of clinical practice and multiple continuing education events.

Passage of this bill would result in significant economic implications for the equine veterinary industry as well as illegal obtaining, administering and dispensing of pharmaceuticals. I implore you to consider the points made in this testimony, and please reach out regarding any questions or clarifications you seek. Thank you for your time in reading this.