

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire,

The practice of equine dentistry is an integral branch of professional equine veterinary practice. This discipline encompasses all aspects of the evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, and prevention of any and all diseases, disorders, and conditions that affect the teeth, oral cavity, mandible, maxillofacial area, and the adjacent and associated structures. Additionally, equine dentistry includes the evaluation of the presentation and contribution of systemic diseases within the oral cavity and the contribution of oral conditions to the overall health of the individual horse.

Any surgical procedure of the head or oral cavity; the administration or prescription of sedatives, tranquilizers, analgesics or anesthetics; procedures which are invasive of the tissues of the oral cavity including, but not limited to, removal of sharp enamel points, treatment of malocclusions of premolars, molars, and incisors, odontoplasty, the extraction of first premolars and deciduous premolars and incisors; extraction of damaged or diseased teeth; treatment of diseased teeth via restorations or endodontic procedures; periodontal and orthodontic treatments; dental radiography and endoscopy of the oral cavity are veterinary dental procedures and should be performed by a licensed veterinarian.

In order to perform equine dental procedures, the horse must be sedated. This is often done with controlled substances. A veterinarian has a DEA license and authority to dispense controlled substances. Lay people do not. A veterinarian has the training to evaluate patient safety ahead of administering sedatives and the skill to manage complications when they arise. Lay people do not. Performing equine dental procedures without sedation is not the standard of care for the animal and negatively impacts the welfare of the animal.

S.B. 976 totally exempts equine dentistry from the practice of veterinary medicine. This means there is no regulation or oversight equine dentistry. This leaves horse owners and horses at risk of poor-quality care without the recourse they would have if the care was provided by a licensed veterinarian. I already routinely see horses with painful pathology either caused by or ignored by individuals illegally practicing equine dentistry, please don't promote more pain and suffering for the horses of Oregon.

PLEASE VOTE NO TO SENATE BILL 976

Respectfully,
Chris Ryan, DVM