

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

Hello,

My name is Moriah Palmer and I am a horse owner of 10+ years. During those years of horse ownership, I have had my horses teeth done both by a licensed veterinarian and a non veterinarian equine dentist. I actually used an equine dentist for many years, as I believed they were “better educated” on equine dentistry than the average veterinarian. This was and is the mantra being fed to many horse owners. Several years later I began working for a veterinarian and was exposed to countless dentals and also educated on the how AND why veterinarians perform dentals the way they do. I compared this to my experience with equine dentists. A stark difference. Equine dentists do not have nearly the extensive training that veterinarians do. Not only is a veterinarian trained on how to do dentals, but also on the anatomy and physiology of the entire rest of the animal and they understand how a small change in the mouth can impact the wellbeing of the entire horse. The equine dentists I have worked with were completely flattening the table angles and smoothing the occlusal surfaces of every equine they worked on, claiming “veterinarians don’t know what they are doing”. If you aren’t familiar with equine dentistry, the ridges on the occlusal surface of the horses tooth is what allows them to grind their diet efficiently. Without it, they cannot chew nor digest their feed as well or as quickly. Also, the table angles of an equines mouth are a crucial part of their anatomy and chewing pattern as well. This is what allows them to chew in a figure 8 pattern and grind their feed. By taking away this table angle, you give them an unnatural bite and create further chewing problems. This is just one example of a failure in equine dentists training that I have seen. I, just like many other owners, had no idea this was wrong because we as owners don’t know equine dentistry. It is unacceptable that these people are taking advantage of a lack of education on owners parts and feeding them distrust in veterinary professionals. This not only damages the wellbeing of the horses but the industry overall. Furthermore, on a note I personally deem more serious, is that many of these equine dentists are handling and using drugs to anesthetize their patients without the proper training nor equipment or resources to know what to do if there was ever a reaction or complication. I am also aware of equine dentists using drugs outside of their legal jurisdiction. There is a reason that a veterinarian, who is trained and has the resources for these situations, should be doing the dental work. I do acknowledge that there are many practitioners in the world that equine dentistry is not their strong suit. Regardless of their skill level, they are still more knowledgeable about the basic and proper anatomy and physiology of the mouth and entire horse. Also, there are plenty of extremely talented and capable veterinarians who do equine

dentistry well. I also know a big reason many owners choose equine dentists over veterinarians is because it is generally cheaper. However again I will say that even if the veterinarian is more expensive, you are paying for quality and knowledge about your horse beyond just its mouth. I would encourage anyone to support their local equine veterinarian.

Thank you.