

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

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Dr. Lacey Owen, am a veterinarian licensed in Washington, Oregon and Arizona. I oppose this measure to allow lay people to practice equine dentistry. There is not a shortage of veterinarians, however there is a shortage of clientele that want to pay for our expertise. Equine dentals are not just as simple as floating the teeth. It is understanding the anatomy and physiology of the dentition and the horse, recognizing a problem, yearly exam to discuss other possible health concerns with the owner at that time, knowing when to refer for advanced diagnostics if needed and much more. Many clients do not seek yearly dental care and seek it only when they notice weight loss. Therefore, the question remains, is this just related to the teeth or is there more involved? Often times it is multifactorial and to be discussed with a medical professional to determine the best course of action. Allowing a lay person to do dentals will only allow them to skip steps that we have been educated and trained to take, in the long run causing more problems and health concerns. We have paid for and spent 4 years in veterinary school to learn much about the whole horse, which must be taken into account when floating the teeth. Not to mention, these lay dentists often times get ahold of sedation drugs that they use illegally, and what happens when something goes wrong there? When they hit the carotid artery or when a horse has a heart condition that they were not aware of because they did not do a physical exam prior to sedating...Or when they over float the teeth, and we have a colic or a choke as an emergency a week later? Who is going to see that in the middle of the night? Not your lay dentist!

Veterinarians are worth the added expense for the equine dental work. We have spent years in education and hundreds of thousands of dollars to be able to appropriately and safely diagnose, sedate and treat these animals. Our oath "to do no harm," is of our up most importance. I strongly encourage you all to take this in consideration when considering this bill. I strongly oppose this bill for the sake of the horse.

Sincerely,
Dr. Lacey Owen