

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Amber Lengele and I am an equine veterinarian located in Junction City, Oregon. I do not support SB 976 for the reason that it does not benefit the horse and it will be to both horse's, and owner's, detriment to allow non-veterinary "dentists" to work on horses legally. I have gone through extensive training for equine dentals, not only through veterinary school, but also through my internship, and frequent continuing education. Not only have I gone through extensive training for best practices for equilibrating the equine mouth, but also sedation techniques for horses with comorbidities, pain control, tooth extraction techniques, radiograph acquisition and interpretation, and more, all of which are essential for providing the horse with the best care. Not only have I done the training, but I perform dentals on hundreds of horses, donkeys, and mules every year. It's something I deeply enjoy. Oftentimes, horses will only visit the veterinarian once per year: for their dental. At this time, a thorough physical exam is done to identify other health conditions. Just this week, I have identified horses that have Cushing's syndrome, heart murmurs or arrhythmias, eye conditions such as cataracts, lameness, poor body condition, skin cancer, and respiratory disease. We discuss nutrition, farrier work, disease exposure, prevention and treatment of colic, and performance concerns. Horses often receive vaccinations at the time of their dental, sometimes blood work as well when the physical exam reveals concerns. Because Oregon law requires a physical exam in order to dispense prescription medications, this is when owners stock their emergency kit with necessary medications and we discuss the scenarios in which these medications may be needed. All of this occurs because they booked a dental with their veterinarian. We have openings every week, even during busy times of the year we are able to fit clients in with very little wait. Not only that, but we travel to under served areas several times per year in order to better serve our clients that often travel several hours to see us. My concern for allowing non-veterinarians to perform dentals is that not only will the horse's health suffer from not having a veterinary-client relationship, but allowing non-veterinarians to perform dentals can be directly damaging. There is no standard accrediting body for non-veterinarian dentists like there is for veterinarians. There is no protection for clients that have a non-veterinarian perform dental work on their horse and damage the horse's teeth or sedate horses illegally putting them in danger for collapse or death from improper use, intra-carotid injection, or sedating horses with heart conditions. Performing dentals is not innocuous - severe damage can occur and this is something I have seen many times when clients come to our clinic after having a non-veterinarian perform a "dental" on their horse. Sometimes they are performing dentals without sedation which not only severely stresses the horse, but does not allow a thorough exam of the mouth. Large hooks that grow up into the gums are missed, the sharp tools used to file teeth often grate the sensitive tissue of the cheeks and gums, and severe abnormalities are missed. I have also seen teeth severely over floated (filed) to the point the pulp is exposed and the tooth will painfully die and decay in the horse's mouth unless it is extracted. When the tooth is overfloated, there is no way for the horse to chew hay or other food and they have to live on a mash diet until the tooth grows back enough for them to eat normally, which can take months to years. And this is not a one time occurrence that I have experienced in my short 6 years in practice.

In conclusion, allowing a non-veterinarian to perform dentals on horses will cause a loss in veterinary-client relationships, it will damage the horse's health by missing important health concerns that

veterinarians identify at every dental exam, and it will damage horse's mouths by allowing unqualified and nonstandardized non-veterinarians to improperly perform dentals. As a veterinarian, I have promised to uphold horse welfare, and this bill is in direct violation of that oath. Thank you for your time in reading this.