

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

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

My name is Ciana Clifton and I am a life-long horse owner, trainer, and am currently and equine veterinary assistant at Pacific Crest Equine Veterinary Services. I understand how important quality, safe, and professional dentistry care is for equines and their owners and I do not support Senate Bill 976.

Becoming certified in lay equine dentistry does not entail the necessary education, oversight, and accountability that keeping equine dentistry within the field of veterinary medicine does. To quote in agreement with what the doctors at the clinic I work for has expressed, "There are no established national or state standards for these non-veterinarian equine "dentists." Thus, a statement of a "valid degree or certification" carries very little meaning. The programs that these individuals attend comprise only weeks of training, there is no minimum education that must be obtained before attending these programs, no standardized exam that they must pass before calling themselves dentists and no regulatory oversight once they have obtained their degree or certification."

Obtaining a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, however, entails four years of schooling to have a thorough understanding of equine anatomy, physiology, and medicine, preceded by four years of a related undergrad degree. Veterinarians are held accountable by an oversight board and are required to continue at least 30 hours of education every two years. Equine dentistry is not a simple trade and impacts the overall health of the horse as well as safety for the owner, as poor or improper dental care can create dangerous behavioral issues due to pain. Poor and improper dental care can also lead to lifelong health issues for horses. Horses I know personally have to now be on specialized diets due to lay dentists over-floating their teeth and creating a smooth chewing surface doesn't allow them to grind grass and hay properly. A thorough understanding of equine anatomy is necessary to properly assess and address a horse's mouth.

Additionally, a thorough examination of the horse's mouth, which includes being able to feel all the horse's teeth including the furthest back molars, requires some level of sedation using prescription drugs and a speculum holding the horse's mouth open. The sedatives used are only available to licensed veterinarians, and yet many of these individuals practicing equine dentistry obtain and use these sedatives through questionable means and without veterinary oversight. This is dangerous to both the

animal's welfare as well as public health. Some lay dentists do not use this level of sedation, but that greatly reduces the ability to safely and thoroughly examine the entire horse's mouth and ensure the floating is performed correctly, and at worse this can be extremely dangerous for both horse and human.

To quote in agreement again with the veterinarians at the clinic I work for, "Many of these individuals who have been performing equine dentistry in Oregon do not even reside in the state. If a problem arises after they have performed a procedure they have often already left the state and are not available for any follow-up care. They do not have the authority or ability to prescribe medications such as pain medications or antibiotics. On the other hand, as equine veterinarians we are entrenched in our local horse communities, we work normal hours during the day and rotate being the doctor on call so we have a veterinarian available 24/7 to respond to our client's equine veterinary emergencies."

I believe equine dentistry is best left in the hands of certified veterinarians, who have the knowledge, accountability, and oversight to do so safely and thoroughly. I urge you to vote No on SB 976. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ciana Clifton