

I am writing in opposition of Senate Bill 1539. I grew up in Eastern Oregon, received my undergraduate and doctoral degrees in Oregon, and have been practicing veterinary medicine in Hermiston for the past 12 years. The Senate Bill 1539 undermines the veterinary profession and endangers animal welfare.

Veterinary training is an extensive 4-year program covering anatomy, diseases, and treatment. Our education far exceeds any course on pregnancy detection. In our clinic alone we palpated over 10,000 head in the last year. The efficiency and accuracy improves with experience as well as being able to implement our training in diagnosing and treating abnormalities detected. It is important to understand that with these volumes of cattle there will be abnormalities simply on a percentage basis. Pregnancy detection courses cannot cover all these important elements. Furthermore, it will require additional tax payer money to oversee the certification of these individuals.

Routine cattle pregnancy checks are one of the primary methods to maintain a valid Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR) with our cattle producers. These visits allow us to evaluate the entire herd, animal handling facilities, and methods. In turn, we gain valuable information and consult our clients appropriately. Working cattle alongside our clients creates a rapport which far exceeds an office style consultation visit. In a given day we can address everything from body condition scoring, nutrition, individual issues such as abscess, lameness, to the current market and production recommendations. Recently, all antibiotics have been placed in the hands of veterinarians to prescribe, only with a valid VCPR. Without these routine, preg-checking visits, it takes away an effective mainstay to create a valid VCPR. The message to the public that you need a veterinarian for medications, but not for pregnancy checks is contradictory. This Bill is undermining veterinarians' education and the services we provide.

My concern for this Senate Bill is not from a financial standpoint. As a mixed animal practitioner I can generate a much larger income with small animal appointments versus pregnancy checking. However, I chose this career to be able to help and educate our cattle producers. Without pregnancy checking, it severely limits routine visits with our large animal clientele. This leaves veterinarians only being needed on an emergency basis, which do not usually fall during business hours. By limiting our scope of practice, it would be difficult to want to continue to work with large animals. Especially if we are only doing emergencies that could have been prevented by proper client education. Furthermore, this bill would create challenges for recruiting and retaining large or mixed animal veterinarians in the state of Oregon. My fear is that by passing this bill fewer large animal veterinarians will be available in the future.

If you have clarifying questions or would like to discuss this matter please contact me by phone or email. I encourage you to listen to the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association and veterinarians practicing large animal medicine. Opposing this bill is critical to animal welfare and preserving the veterinary profession in the state of Oregon.