

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1604

January 26, 2007

The Honorable Robert Byrd
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Byrd:

As you finalize the FY2007 Continuing Resolution, I would like to bring to your attention an issue of great importance to Kansans and all American animal owners: funding for the National Veterinary Medical Service Act (Public Law 108-161). Originally considered in the 108th Congress, the NVMSA passed the Senate on November 24, 2003 and was signed by the President on December 6, 2003.

Although the NVMSA is short in length, its importance cannot be underestimated. The Act authorizes the federal government to repay veterinary school loans for veterinarians who agree to practice in underserved areas. States like Kansas and its predominantly rural neighbors are full of livestock producers who are continually in need of qualified vets, and this Act provides them and their communities with certain tools they need to remain competitive in today's global markets.

In the FY2006 Agriculture and Rural Development Appropriations bill, I successfully advocated for the inclusion of \$500,000 for the NVMSA. In the 109th Congress' FY2007 bill, the Senate recommended \$750,000 for this important act. I respectfully request that as you draft the year-long FY2007 Continuing Resolution, you consider restoring this \$750,000 and showing our livestock producers that the federal government is committed to addressing critical veterinarian shortages.

Since the NVMSA has been passed by Congress and signed by the President, it can in no way be considered an earmark or a parochial project. Veterinarians serve Americans of all types, from owners of beloved household pets to the largest of cattle producers in Kansas. I hope that you are able to find the necessary means to fund this important act and address a critical problem. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,



Sam Brownback
United States Senator