

State of Vermont House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Joint House Resolution

J.R.H. 23

Joint resolution relating to the implementation of the National Veterinary Medical Service Act

Offered by: Representatives Johnson of Canaan, Ainsworth of Royalton, Bissonnette of Winooski, Clerkin of Hartford, Godin of Milton, Larrabee of Danville, LaVoie of Swanton, Lawrence of Lyndon, Malcolm of Pawlet, Moran of Wardsboro, Perry of Richford, Stevens of Shoreham, Westman of Cambridge, Winters of Williamstown and Zuckerman of Burlington

Whereas, the services of veterinarians who are familiar with the care, including birth-related support, of large food source animals is essential for the successful operation of a dairy or beef farm, and

Whereas, despite the continuing need for large animal veterinarians, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association, since 1990, the number of veterinarians whose practice focuses on large animals has dropped from nearly 6,000 to below 4,500, and less than 10 percent of veterinarians in private practice focus on this type of practice, and

Whereas, the association estimates that by 2016, four out of every 100 large food animal veterinarian positions will remain vacant, and

Whereas, a significant factor causing the shortage in the supply of large food animal veterinarians is the debt that results from attending veterinary school which can reach \$100,000.00 and the potential for earning a larger income from a small animal practice, and

Whereas, in response to the crisis in large food animal support and other veterinary services, in 2003, Congress enacted public law 108-161, the "National Veterinary Medical Service Act," (the Act) and

Whereas, section two of the Act established a loan repayment program intended to repay a percentage of a veterinarian's professional education debt for each year of an agreed period of time that the veterinarian serves in a "veterinarian shortage situation" as the Secretary of Agriculture defines the term, and

Whereas, the specific parameters of the program, including a definition of a veterinarian shortage situation, are not yet finalized, and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service is implementing the act in a

two-phase approach with phase one limited to a persons qualifying for a previously existing loan repayment program that is limited to federal employees, and

Whereas, also during phase one, USDA will promulgate rules that define a veterinary shortage, and

Whereas, the documented crisis in providing large food animal veterinary support most definitely merits designation as a veterinary shortage for purposes of the phase-two loan repayment program under the Act, now therefore be it


Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly urges the United States Department of Agriculture to define the practice of veterinary medicine focusing on large food animals as a veterinary shortage for purposes of the loan repayment program under the National Veterinary Medical Service Act, and be it further

Resolved: That the secretary of state be directed to send a copy of this resolution to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Michael Johanns; to Dr. Robert Nichols, Assistant Director of the American Veterinary Medical Association's Government Relations Division in Suitland, Maryland; to Vermont State Veterinarian Dr. Kerry Rood; and to the members of the Vermont Congressional Delegation.



Gaye R. Symington
Speaker of the House



Brian E. Duble
President of the Senate

Attested to:



Donald G. Milne
Clerk, House of Representatives