AVMA’s Government Relations Division (GRD) advocates the association’s policies and positions on federal legislative and regulatory issues that influence animal and human health and advance the veterinary medical profession. This document includes a list of key federal legislation, organized by issue area, which the GRD is monitoring for the 115th Congress (Jan. 2017-Jan 2019).
# Table of Contents

Resources ........................................................................................................................................... 2
AVMA’s Legislative Scoring System ........................................................................................................... 2
AVMA Government Relations Division Contacts ......................................................................................... 2

Issue Areas ........................................................................................................................................... 3
Appropriations ......................................................................................................................................... 3
Animal Health and Welfare Issues ............................................................................................................ 4
Food-Related Issues ................................................................................................................................. 9
Pharmaceutical Issues ............................................................................................................................... 10
Research Issues ........................................................................................................................................ 11
Small Business Issues ............................................................................................................................ 11
Tax Issues ............................................................................................................................................... 13
Veterinary Professional and Educational Issues ......................................................................................... 13

Bills AVMA is Monitoring ....................................................................................................................... 17
More Information ..................................................................................................................................... 17
Resources

AVMA Legislative Scoring System

The AVMA prioritizes how it will address bills when they are introduced in Congress. The scoring system uses the following three rankings:

- **Support** – This means that the AVMA supports the bill and may expend resources to advance the bill through the legislative process.
- **Non-support** – This means that the AVMA opposes the bill and may expend resources to defeat the bill through the legislative process. If applicable and appropriate, AVMA may identify areas of the bill that would need to be changed for support of the bill to be a consideration.
- **Monitor** – This means that the AVMA has reviewed the bill, but has not taken a position. The Government Relations Division staff will continue to monitor the legislation and advise AVMA’s Legislative Advisory Committee should the legislation’s status change.

AVMA Government Relations Division Contacts

Below is the contact information for AVMA’s Government Relations Division staff:

- Dr. Kent McClure, Chief Governmental Relations Officer, 800-321-1473, ext. 3203 kmclure@avma.org
- Dr. Mark Lutscheunig, Director, 800-321-1473 ext. 3205, mlutscheunig@avma.org
- Ms. Alexandra “Alex” Khalife Sands, Assistant Director, 800-321-1473 ext. 3216, asands@avma.org
- Dr. Lauren Stump, Assistant Director, 800-321-1473 ext. 3211, lstump@avma.org
**Issue Areas**

**Federal appropriations for fiscal 2018**

AVMA seeks federal funding in support of federal programs and agencies directly impacting veterinary medicine, animal health and welfare, food safety, disease surveillance and public health. Additionally, AVMA actively engages with coalitions to bolster funding for food and agricultural research, biomedical research and antibiotic resistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Agency</th>
<th>Final FY17</th>
<th>AVMA recommendation</th>
<th>House bill</th>
<th>Senate Bill</th>
<th>Final FY18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (USDA/NIFA)</td>
<td>$6.5 million</td>
<td>$6.5 million</td>
<td>$6.5 million</td>
<td>$6.5 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Services Grant Program (USDA/NIFA)</td>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
<td>$3 million</td>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank (USDA/NIFA)</td>
<td>$1.25 million</td>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
<td>$1.25 million</td>
<td>$1.25 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Health and Disease Research (USDA/NIFA)</td>
<td>$4 million</td>
<td>$10 million</td>
<td>$4 million</td>
<td>$4 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative (USDA/NIFA)</td>
<td>$8 million</td>
<td>$10 million</td>
<td>$8 million</td>
<td>$8 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Food Research Institute (USDA/NIFA)</td>
<td>$350 million</td>
<td>$420 million</td>
<td>$375 million</td>
<td>$375 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Research Service (USDA/ARS)</td>
<td>$1.17 billion</td>
<td>$1.286 billion</td>
<td>$1.13 billion</td>
<td>$1.18 billion</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS)</td>
<td>$934 million</td>
<td>$950 million</td>
<td>$906.4 million</td>
<td>$953.2 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Animal Health Laboratory Network (USDA/APHIS and NIFA)</td>
<td>$16.3 million</td>
<td>$30 million</td>
<td>$16.3 million</td>
<td>$16.3 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Animal Health Monitoring System (USDA/APHIS)</td>
<td>$4.5 million</td>
<td>$4.5 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Protection Act enforcement (USDA/APHIS)</td>
<td>$697,000</td>
<td>$705,000</td>
<td>$700,000</td>
<td>$697,000</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA/FSIS)</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>PHV R&amp;R report language</td>
<td>$1.032 billion</td>
<td>$1.038 billion</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Veterinary Medicine (HHS/FDA/CVM)</td>
<td>$162.852 million</td>
<td>$187.825 million</td>
<td>$187.825 million</td>
<td>$162.8 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (HHS-CVM)</td>
<td>$10.8 million</td>
<td>$11 million</td>
<td>$11 million</td>
<td>$11 million</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Institutes of Health (HHS/NIH)</td>
<td>$34.1 billion</td>
<td>$36.1 billion</td>
<td>$35 billion</td>
<td>$36.1 billion</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Status:** The U.S. House of Representatives, on Sept. 14 passed, by a vote of 211-198, an omnibus bill that would provide $1.23 trillion for federal departments and agencies covered by the 12 unfinished fiscal 2018 spending bills, including $621.5 billion for defense and $511 billion for nondefense discretionary spending. This is the first time since 2009 that the House has passed all 12 spending bills before the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30. As of mid-September, just 10 of the 12 spending bills have passed by the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee. None have been passed by the full chamber. Congress passed a continuing resolution through Dec. 8 to give itself time to complete work on funding levels for fiscal 2018.

**Coalitions:** To boost funding, AVMA collaborates with the Animal Agriculture Coalition, National Coalition for Food & Agriculture Research, Supporters of Agricultural Research, the AFRI Coalition, the Friends of ARS, the National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science, U.S. Stakeholder Forum on Antimicrobial Resistance, the Adhoc Group for Medical Research, National Association for Biomedical Research, the Coalition on Biodefense & Public Health Preparedness, and Wildlife Services Coalition.

---

**Animal Health and Welfare Issues**

**H.R. 113/S. 1706 Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act of 2017**

The legislation amends Sect. 302 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FDCA) so that equine parts would be deemed unsafe under Sect. 409 (Food Additives) and 512 (New Animal Drugs) of the Act. The bill prohibits the knowing sale or transport of equines or equine parts in interstate or foreign commerce. Equine raised in the U.S. are frequently treated with substances that are not approved for horses intended for human consumption and equine parts are therefore unsafe within the meaning of sect. 409 of the FDCA; and equines raised in the U.S. are frequently treated with drugs, including phenylbutazone, acepromazine, boldenone undecylenate, omeprazole, ketoprofen, xylazine, hyaluronic acid, nitrofurazone, polysulfated glycosaminoglycan, clenbuterol, tolazoline, and ponazuril, which are not approved for use in horses intended for human consumption and equine parts are therefore unsafe within the meaning of sect. 512 of the FDCA.

**Status:** Rep. Vern Buchanan [R-FL-16] introduced H.R. 113 on Jan. 25, 2017, and was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health and House Committee on Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture. Senator Robert Menendez(D-NJ) introduced S. 1706 on 8/2/2017, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

**AVMA Position:** Nonsupport

**Primary Contact:** Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

---

**H.R. 909 / S. 322, Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act**

This legislation broadens the definition of stalking to include conduct that causes a person to experience a reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury to his or her pet. Additionally, an interstate violation of a protection order includes interstate travel with the intent to violate a protection order against a pet that is included within the scope of the protection order. The bill specifies the applicable criminal penalty—a prison term of up to five years, a fine, or both—for a person who commits an interstate violation of a protection order against a pet. A defendant who commits a domestic violence offense or an interstate violation of a protection order, mandatory restitution in the "full amount of victim's losses" includes costs incurred for veterinary services related to the pet. The Department of Agriculture is directed to award grants for shelter and housing assistance and support services for domestic violence victims with pets. Finally, states should include, in domestic violence protection orders, protections against violence or threats against a person's pet.

**Status:** H.R 909 was introduced by Rep. Katharine Clark (D-MA-5) on Feb. 7, 2017 and it was referred to House Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations; and the House Agriculture Committee Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture.
Status: S. 322 was introduced by Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI) on Feb. 7, 2017 and then referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.R. 1243/S. 498 Battlefield Excellence through Superior Training (BEST) Practices Act
H.R. 1243 requires the Secretary of Defense, no later than: (1) Oct. 1, 2018, to develop, test, and validate human-based training methods for training members of the Armed Forces in the treatment of combat trauma injuries, with the goal of replacing live animal-based training methods; and (2) Oct. 1, 2022, to use only use human-based training methods for such purposes. Prohibits the use of animals in such training thereafter.

Status: H.R. 1243 was introduced by Rep. Hank Johnson (D-GA-4th) on Feb. 28, 2017 and referred to the House Committee on Armed Services; Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. S. 498 was introduced by Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) on March 2, 2017 and referred to the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

AVMA Position: H.R. 1243 Non-support; S. 498 Monitor
Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.R. 1338 Horse Protection Amendments Act
This legislation amends the Horse Protection Act to create one governing body, the Horse Industry Organization, to manage the inspection and penalty process against “soring” horses throughout the walking horse show industry. The bill places requirements on how and which individuals are appointed to the single HIO board. It also changes what inspection methods can be used and what they can include.

Status: Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.-4) introduced H.R. 1338 on Mar. 2, 2017 and it was referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

AVMA Position: Non-support
Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.R. 1629, Public Safety and Wildlife Protection Act
This legislation would restrict the use of steel-jaw leghold traps and Conibear traps on animals in the United States. The bill attempts to reduce risk to public safety, harm to companion animals and wildlife from trapping by prohibiting the import or export of, and the shipment in interstate commerce of, steel-jaw leghold traps and Conibear traps.

Status: Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC-12) introduced the bill on 3/20/2017, where it was referred to House Energy and Commerce Committee, House Ways and Means committee, and House Foreign Affairs Committee. It was then referred to the House Ways and means Committee’s Subcommittee on Trade and House Energy and Commerce Committee’s Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection.

AVMA Position: Non-support
Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.R. 1727, Limiting Inhumane Federal Trapping Act
H.R. 1727 would prohibit any personnel of the Departments of Interior or Agriculture (DOI or USDA) in performing their duties if using, recommending, training in the use of, or planning for the use of, any body-gripping trap used to kill or capture an animal. Prohibition does not apply to dismantling such traps. Prohibits possession of any such trap by any person on public lands, except in Indian country, regardless of employment or affiliation with DOI or USDA. The prohibition does not apply to dismantling such traps, or to certain uses to control invasive species or protect a species listed as endangered or threatened. Some exceptions according to alternatives apply.
**Status:** Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR-3) Introduced the bill on 3/27/2017. It was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Federal Lands; and the House Committee on Agriculture Subcommittee on Federal Lands.

**AVMA Position:** Nonsupport  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

**H.R. 1847 Prevent all Soring Tactics (PAST) Act**

The legislation amends the Horse Protection Act (HPA) to designate additional unlawful acts with regard to the practice of soring horses. It also strengthens penalties for violations and improves USDA enforcement. Specific provisions include: defining an "action device" as any boot, collar, chain, roller, or other device that encircles or is placed upon the lower extremity of the leg of a horse; clarifying that the term "management" includes the sponsoring organization and the event manager; creating a penalty structure that requires horses to be disqualified for an increasing period of time based on the number of violations (from 180 days up to three years); requiring the USDA to license, train, assign and oversee inspectors who enforce the HPA; making the actual act of soring illegal and/or directing another person to cause a horse to become sore illegal; prohibiting the use of action devices on any limb of Tennessee Walking Horses, Spotted Saddle Horses, or Racking Horses at horse shows, exhibitions, sales or auctions; banning the use of weighted shoes, pads, wedges, hoof bands, or other devices that are not strictly protective or therapeutic in nature; increasing civil and criminal penalties for violators; requiring a period of time where show horses are banned from participating in shows, exhibitions, sales or auctions for one or more violations; and disqualifying violators permanently upon their third or higher violation.

**Status:** Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla.-3) introduced H.R. 1847 on Mar. 30, 2017, and it was referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

**H.R. 1494 / S. 654 Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act**

This legislation amends the federal criminal code to prohibit intentionally engaging in animal crushing in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the U.S. Current law only prohibits knowingly creating or distributing an animal crush video. Also, the legislation adds exceptions for conduct that is for predator or pest control, medical or scientific research, or necessary to protect the life or property of a person from a serious threat caused by an animal.

**Status:** H.R. 1494 was introduced by Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX-21) on Mar. 10, 2017, and was referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

**Status:** S. 654 was introduced by Sen. Pat Toomey (R-PA) on Mar. 15, 2017, and was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

**H.R. 1141 Pet Safety and Protection Act**

This legislation amends the Animal Welfare Act to list permissible sources of dogs and cats used by research facilities to include dogs and cats obtained: 1) from a licensed dealer, 2) from a publicly owned and operated pound or shelter that meets specific requirements, 3) by donation from a person who bred and raised the dog or cat and owned it for no less than one year, or 4) from a research facility licensed by the Secretary of Agriculture. It prohibits dealers from selling or otherwise providing any research facility with random-source dogs or cats unless specified requirements are met.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport  Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.R. 1438/S. 1919 Refuge from Cruel Trapping
This legislation amends the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 to prohibit the use or possession of body-gripping traps in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Status: H.R. 1438 was introduced by Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY-17th) on Mar. 8, 2017 and was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, referred to the Subcommittee on Federal Lands. S. 1919 was introduced on October 4, 2017 by Senator Cory Booker and referred to the Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Works.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport  Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.R. 1759 Traveling Exotic Animal and Public Safety Protection Act
This legislation amends the Animal Welfare Act to restrict the use of exotic and wild animals in traveling performances. The legislation states that Congress finds that conditions inherent to traveling performances subject exotic and wild animals to compromised welfare and chronic stress, and present public and worker health and safety risks not adequately addressed by current regulation. The bill includes several findings related to public, worker, and animal safety as well as cruelty and oversight. The legislation prohibits any performance of or participation of an exotic or wild animal in a traveling animal act. H.R. 1759 does not apply to non-mobile, permanent institutions; environmental education programs by accredited facilities, if used for no more than 6 months in any year, no more than 12 hours per day; use by a university, college, laboratory, or other research facility registered with the Secretary; use in film or television if live animal exhibition before a live audience is not used; use in a rodeo; domestic or farm animals.

Status: H.R. 1759 was introduced by Rep. Raul M. Grijalva (D-AZ-3) on April 11, 2017 and referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport  Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.R. 1818 Big Cat Public Safety
This legislation would amend the Lacey Act to clarify provisions enacted by the Captive Wildlife Safety Act. Specifically, it prohibits any person to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce, or in a manner substantially affecting interstate or foreign commerce, or to breed or possess, any prohibited wildlife species.

Status: H.R. 1818 was introduced by Rep. Jeff Denham (R-CA-10) on Mar. 30, 2017 and was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport  Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.Res. 133 National Pet Adoption Day
This resolution expresses support for the designations of a National Pet Adoption Day and Month. The resolution requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe “National Pet Adoption Day” and “National Pet Adoption Month” Finally, the resolution encourages the people of the United States to adopt pets from local animal shelters and rescues.
Status: H.Res. 133 was introduced by Rep. Roger Williams (R-TX-25) on Feb. 26, 2017 and referred to House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.Con.Res. 46 National Purebred Dog Day
This resolution expresses support for the designation of a “National Purebred Dog Day” as there is no such congressionally designated day; declares purebred dogs are living legacies that serve many functions through work and companionship; purebred dogs have been of enormous help to medical science; all dogs regardless of their heritage should be valued; the purpose-bred dog should be cherished and preserved, and each breed is etched in cultural history.

Status: H.Con.Res. 46 was introduced by Rep. Ted Yoho (R-FL-3) on Apr. 4, 2017 and was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.R. 2801/S. 1666, Helping Overcome Trauma for Children in Rear Seats or the “Hot Cars Act of 2017”
The Hot Cars Act would require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring all new passenger motor vehicles to be equipped with a child safety alert system.

Status: H.R. 2801 was introduced on June 9, 2017 by Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH/13) and referred to House Energy and Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection; and House Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. S. 1666 was introduced on July 27, 2017 by Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.R. 3197, Preventing Unkind and Painful Procedures and Experiments on Respected Species Act of 2017 or the “PUPPERS Act of 2017” and related H.Amdt. 226 to H.R. 3219, Make America Secure Appropriations Act, 2018
H.R. 3197 would amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from conducting medical research causing significant pain or distress to dogs. H.Amdt. 226 states that none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to purchase, breed, transport, house, feed, maintain, dispose of, or experiment on dogs as part of the conduct of any study assigned to pain category D or E, as defined by the Department of Agriculture.

Status: H.R. 3197 was introduced by Rep. Dave Brat (R-VA-7) on July 12, 2017 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, Subcommittee on Health. H.Amdt. 226 to H.R. 3219 was introduced on July 26, 2017 by Rep. Dave Brat (R-VA-7) and was agreed by a voice vote.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport
Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

H.R. 2651, Horseracing Integrity Act of 2017
This legislation would establish an Anti-Doping Authority as an independent organization with responsibility for developing and administering an anti-doping program for Thoroughbred, Quarter, or Standardbred racing horses. The bill prohibits the administration of any substance within 24 hours of the horse’s next racing start (i.e., eliminates administration of race-day medication, including furosemide).
Status: H.R. 2651 was introduced on May 25, 2017 by Rep. Andy Barr (R-KY-6) and referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport  
Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

**Food-Related Issues**

**H.R. 677, CBRN Intelligence and Information Sharing Act of 2017**

This legislation amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish intelligence and information sharing in the Office of Intelligence Analysis in the Department of Homeland Security related to the possible use of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agents as well as supporting intelligence analysis related global infectious disease, public health, food, agricultural, and veterinary issues. In addition, the legislation provides for sharing information and providing support to state, and tribal authorities, other federal agencies and other relevant national biosecurity and biodefense stakeholders.

Status: Rep. Martha McSally (R-Arizona-2) introduced H.R. 677 on Jan. 24, 2017 and it was referred to the House Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 677 was considered under suspension of the rules and passes the house on Jan. 31, 2017. It was received in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

AVMA Position: Support  
Primary Contact: Dr. Lauren Stump

**H.R. 1238 / S. 500, Securing Our Agriculture and Food Act**

The legislation amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism. The legislation requires coordination of DHS’s efforts on defending United States food, agriculture, and veterinary systems against terrorism and other high-consequence events that pose a high risk to homeland security. The legislation specifies it may not be construed as altering or superseding the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture relating to food and agriculture. This bill specifically affirms the importance of veterinary medicine and veterinarians in defense against bio- and agro-terrorism.

Status: H.R. 1238 was introduced on Feb. 28, 2017 by Rep. David Young (R-IA-3) and referred to the House Homeland Security Committee, House Agriculture Committee, and House Energy and Commerce. H.R. 1238 was reported favorably out of the House Homeland Security Committee unamended on Mar. 8, 2017 and passed in the House on Mar. 22, 2017. H.R. 1238 was sent to the Senate where it was referred to the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs. The committee discharged the bill, and it passed the Senate with amendments by unanimous consent. The House agreed to the Senate amendments, and it was signed by the President on June 30, 2017 (P.L. 115-43).

S. 500 was introduced on Mar. 2, 2017 by Sen. Pat Roberts (R-KS) and was referred to the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs.

AVMA Position: Support  
Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

**H.R. 2657/S. 1232, Processing Revival and Intrastate Meat Exemption (PRIME) Act**

This bill amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act to expand the exemption of custom slaughtering of animals from federal inspection requirements. Under current law, the exemption applies if the meat is slaughtered for personal, household, guest, and employee uses. The bill expands the exemption to include meat that is: slaughtered and prepared at a custom slaughter facility in accordance with the laws of the state where the
facility is located; and prepared exclusively for distribution to household consumers in the state or restaurants, hotels, boarding houses, grocery stores, or other establishments in the state that either prepare meals served directly to consumers or offer meat and food products for sale directly to consumers in the state. The bill does not preempt any state law concerning: (1) the slaughter of animals or the preparation of carcasses, parts thereof, meat and meat food products at a custom slaughter facility; or (2) the sale of meat or meat food products.

**Status:** Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Kentucky-4) introduced H.R. 2657 on May 25th, 2017 and it was referred to the House Agriculture Committee. It was referred to the Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture on June 26, 2017. Senator Angus King introduced S. 1232 on 5/25/2017 and it has not been referred to a committee.

**AVMA Position:** Nonsupport

**Primary Contact:** Dr. Lauren Stump

**S. 616, Food Security is National Security Act**

This legislation amends section 721 of the Defense Production Act of 1950 to include the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services as members of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States and to require the Committee to consider the security of the food and agriculture systems of the United States as a factor to be considered when determining to take action with respect to foreign investment.

**Status:** S. 616 was introduced by Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) on Mar. 14, 2017 and was referred to the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

**AVMA Position:** Support

**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

**Pharmaceutical Issues**

**H.R. 623, Fairness to Pet Owners Act**

This legislation is purported to promote competition and help consumers save money by giving them the freedom to choose where they buy prescription pet medications. Veterinarians would be required to provide pet owners with a copy of their pet’s prescription, whether or not requested and prior to offering to fill or dispense the medication. The veterinarian may not require payment for the prescription, require the pet owner to sign a waiver or disclaim liability.

**Status:** Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah-3) introduced H.R. 623 on Jan. 24, 2017 and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

**AVMA Position:** Nonsupport

**Primary Contact:** Dr. Lauren Stump

**Resources:** For more information see AVMA's advocacy campaign page, “Prescription writing mandate is unnecessary for veterinarians.”

**H.R. 1587, Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA)**

This legislation would amend the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to to preserve the effectiveness of medically important antimicrobials used in the treatment of human and animal diseases. The bill would require drug manufacturers that hold approvals for animal drugs that are medically important antimicrobials to demonstrate with reasonable certainty that no harm to human health will be caused due to the development of antimicrobial resistance attributable to certain uses of that particular drug. The bill defines therapeutic use of antimicrobials in food animals as only for the specific purpose of treating an animal with a documented disease or infection.
Status: Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.-25) introduced H.R. 1587 on Mar. 17, 2017, and it was referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee’s Subcommittee on Health.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport  Primary Contact: Dr. Lauren Stump

S. 629, Preventing Antibiotic Resistance Act (PARA) of 2017
This bill amends the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to refuse a new animal drug application if the drug is a medically important antimicrobial (used to treat humans) and the applicant fails to demonstrate that the drug meets specified criteria for use in animals, including that: 1) the drug is effective, 2) the drug is targeted to animals at risk of developing a specific bacterial disease, 3) the drug has a defined duration of therapy, and 4) there is reasonable certainty of no harm to human health from microbial resistance to the drug. Sponsors of certain medically important antimicrobials already approved for use in food-producing animals would be required to submit evidence to the FDA that demonstrates that their drug meets the criteria described above for approved indications. The FDA would also be required to withdraw approval for any indication for which the FDA determines there is insufficient evidence that the drug meets the criteria. This bill expresses the sense of the Senate that a veterinarian-client-patient relationship should ensure that medically important antimicrobials are used in food-producing animals in a manner consistent with best practices.


AVMA Position: Nonsupport  Primary Contact: Dr. Lauren Stump

Research Issues

AVMA advocates for federal appropriations in support of agricultural research at U.S. Department of Agriculture and biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health. Additionally, AVMA supports efforts to ensure facilities and administrative (F&A) reimbursements are sufficient to cover a portion of a Colleges of Veterinary Medicine’s infrastructure and operations costs related to federally-funded research. F&A costs, commonly referred to as indirect costs, encompass: the maintenance of sophisticated, high-tech laboratories and research facilities; utilities such as lighting and heating; hazardous waste disposal; data-storage; information technology and internet services; and the administrative support required to comply with various federal, state, and local regulations and reporting requirements. Historically, the federal government has partnered with universities to pay for these critical and necessary research expenses, just as it does when it contracts with industry or utilizes is own federal laboratories to conduct research.

Small Business Issues

H.R. 1101, Small Business Health Fairness Act
This legislation amends the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) to establish association health plans (AHPs) and establishes requirements relating to certification, sponsors and boards of trustees, participation and coverage, nondiscrimination, contribution rates, and voluntary termination. AHPs offering benefits that are not health insurance must: 1) establish and maintain sufficient reserves and stop-loss insurance to cover those benefits, and 2) make annual payments to a fund to be used to pay for stop-loss insurance for such AHPs for which there is a reasonable expectation that claims would not be satisfied without such insurance. AHPs that fail to meet these requirements are subject to termination. The Department of Labor must establish a Solvency Standards Working Group. States may tax contributions to AHPs, with certain conditions. The legislation preempts state laws that preclude health insurers from: 1) offering health insurance in
connection with a certified AHP; or 2) offering health insurance of the same policy type to other employers in the state that are eligible for coverage under AHPs.

**Status:** H.R. 1101, introduced by Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX-3), passed by a vote of 236-175 in the U.S. House of Representatives on Mar. 22, 2017 and was then sent to the U.S. Senate for consideration on Mar. 23. It was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

**Employer Recruitment & Retention Tools: H.R. 795, Employer Participation in Student Loan Assistance Act / S. 796, Employer Participation in Repayment Act**

AVMA supports giving employers a recruitment and retention tool that ultimately reduces educational debt. Under the bill employers would be permitted to give employees up to $5,250/year towards repayment of student loans. The employer would get a tax break while employees would not be taxed on the money. Absent the tax benefit any help an employer were to give an employee would be considered compensation.

**Status:** H.R. 795 was introduced by Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL-13) was introduced on Feb. 1, 2017 and was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

**Status:** S. 796 was introduced by Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA) on March 30, 2017 and was referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

**H.R. 2193, Remote Transactions Parity Act / S. 976, Marketplace Fairness Act**

This legislation grants States authority to enforce State and local sales and use tax laws on remote transactions. AVMA supports e-fairness legislation because it impacts the bottom line of veterinary practices. Online retailers selling pet medications, products or equipment have a built-in advantage of as much as 10% over brick-and-mortar businesses simply because they do not collect legally owed sales taxes. Ad addition, uncollected taxes result in the loss of revenue for states to support public services including higher education.

**Status:** H.R. 2193 was introduced by Rep. Kristi Noem (R-SD-At Large) on Apr. 27, 2017 and was referred to the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law.

**Status:** S. 976 was introduced by Sen. Mike Enzi (R-WY) on Apr. 27, 2017 and was referred to the Senate Finance Committee, and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

**Overtime Pay & Exempt Employees**

Before an adjustment is made for exempt salaried employees, AVMA is urging congress to require the DOL to conduct a full and complete economic analysis on small businesses and nonprofit employers. The Trump Administration has opted not to defend the Department of Labor’s (DOL) overtime rule for exempt salaried employees. The rule would make exempt employees earning less than $47,476 annually qualified for time-and-a-half when they work more than 40 hours a week. The current threshold to qualify for overtime pay for these workers is $23,476. The overtime regulation was last adjusted in 2004.

**AVMA Position:** Monitoring issue  
**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands
**Tax Issues**

**H.R. 1268 / S. 487, Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act**
AVMA supports legislation exempting Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program awards and similar State-administered for veterinarians from a 39% withholding tax has been introduced for the last three congresses. AVMA urges congress to pass this important legislation which will directly help rural America gain access to needed veterinary services for livestock and public health. The cost per award over an initial three-year contract is $104,250 ($75,000 for the loan repayment award and $29,250 for withholding taxes). Between 2010 and 2016, USDA has offered 388 VMLRP awards to veterinarians; meanwhile nearly 1,200 veterinarians have applied to the program. VMLRP veterinarians now practice in 46 states, Puerto Rico and on U.S. federal lands.

**Status:** H.R. 2193 was introduced by Rep. Adrian Smith (R-NE-3) with Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI-3) on Mar. 1, 2017 and was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

**Status:** S. 487 was introduced by Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID) with Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) on Mar. 1, 2017 and was referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

**S. 405 / H.R. 1659, Stop Taxing Death and Disability Act**
This legislation would exclude loan forgiveness from death or disability, including the Total and Permanent Disability loan discharge, from the calculation of gross income for income tax purposes.

**Status:** S. 405 was introduced by Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del) on Feb. 16, 2017 and was referred to the Senate Finance.

**Status:** H.R. 1659 was introduced by Peter Roskam (R-IL-6) on Mar. 21, 2017 and was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee, and the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

**Veterinary Professional and Educational Issues**

AVMA recognizes that educational debt can be a significant burden on aspiring veterinarians and early career veterinarians and it has broader implications for the veterinary profession. AVMA is focused on ameliorating shortcomings in the federal student aid system as congress works to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. AVMA is working to advance legislation to:
1) preserve Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program; 2) establish federal refinancing option; 3) eliminate origination fees; 4) lower interest rates; 5) maintain federal student loan borrowing limits; 6) increase awareness of income-driven repayment plans; 7) restore subsidized Stafford Loans; 8) maintain Perkins Loan Program; and 9) increase financial literacy.

**H.R. 2949 / S. 1384, Joint Consolidation Loan Separation Act**
This legislation would allow a married couple or a previously married couple who pursued a joint loan, to separate their consolidation. Note: from 1993 until 2006, the U.S. Department of Education issued joint consolidation loans to married couples. Congress eliminated the program in 2006, but did not provide a means of severing existing loans, even in the event of domestic violence, financial abuse, or an unresponsive partner. As a result, there are borrowers nationwide who remain liable for their spouse’s consolidated debt with no legal options for relief.
Status: Both bills were introduced on June 20, 2017. H.R. 2949 was introduced by Rep. David Price (D-NC-4) and was referred to House Education and the Workforce Committee. S. 1384 was introduced Sen. Mark Warner, (D-VA) was referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

AVMA Position: Support  
Primary Contact: Alex Sands

H.R. 159, Wildlife Veterinarians Employment and Training Act (Wildlife VET Act)
This legislation aims to expand the workforce of veterinarians specialized in the care and conservation of wild animals through developing educational programs focused on wildlife and zoological veterinary medicine; creating newly funded positions for wildlife and zoo clinical and research veterinarians; establishing a loan repayment program for veterinary students going into wildlife or zoological medicine; providing incentives to study and practice wildlife and zoological veterinary medicine; helping colleges of veterinary medicine develop curricula to train students in the health management of wildlife in their natural environment and in captivity; and by expanding the number of educational and training programs in wildlife and zoological medicine.

Status: H.R. 159 was introduced by Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-Fla-20) on Jan. 3, 2017 and was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands and the Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans; in addition to the House Agriculture Committee’s Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture.

AVMA Position: Support  
Primary Contact: Alex Sands

H.R. 1635, Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act
This legislation would change the current one-time entrance counseling requirement for federal student loans and Pell Grants into an annual counseling requirement.

Status: H.R. 1635 was introduced by Rep. Bret Guthrie (R-Ky-2) on Mar. 20, 2017 and was referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

AVMA Position: Support  
Primary Contact: Alex Sands

H.R. 1429, Letter of Estimated Annual Debt for Students (LEADS) Act
This legislation would require schools to provide students with annual notices of student loan borrowing amounts. The notice would also include the cumulative balance of education loans owed by the student at that date, the amount of any new loans to be disbursed during the academic year, the projected cumulative balance of education loans that will be owed after graduation, and projected monthly payment amounts assuming a standard repayment plan. The U.S. Department of Education would create a template for schools to comply.

Status: H.R. 1429 was introduced by Rep. Luke Messer (R-IN-6) on Mar. 8, 2017 and was referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

AVMA Position: Support  
Primary Contact: Alex Sands

H.R. 1614, Student Loan Refinancing Act
This legislation would allow students to refinance Direct Loans at the interest rate at the time of the modification.

Status: H.R. 1614 was introduced by Rep. Mark Pocan (D-Wisc.-2) on Mar. 17, 2017 and was referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

AVMA Position: Support  
Primary Contact: Alex Sands
**H.R. 2718, Federal Student Loan Refinancing Act**

H.R. 2718 would automatically refinance interest rates on loans made under the Direct Loan Program and the defunct Federal Family Education Loan program to 4 percent. The newly consolidated loan will have 0.4% origination fee on the principal balance. Note: Congress sets the interest rate for federal student loans, and the rates are fixed by law. Currently there is no federal refinancing option available to student borrowers; however, a borrower wishing to refinance federal student loans may opt to go with a private lender to secure new terms and conditions. A private lender typically requires a good credit score and/or having a cosigner. Also, federal student loans refinanced into a private loan lose their federal borrower benefits and protections (grace, deferment, forbearance, etc.). only borrowers with federal loans are eligible for a wide variety of government loan repayment programs, including Public Service Loan Forgiveness. When a federal refinancing option is available a borrower would not lose these benefits and protections.

**Status:** H.R. 2718 was introduced by Rep. Scott Peters (D-Calif.-25) on May 25, 2017 and was referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

**AVMA Position:** Support

**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

---

**H.R. 2482, Federal Perkins Loan Program Extension Act of 2017**

This legislation would extend the Federal Perkins Loan Program for two additional years by moving the authorization expiration from Sept. 30, 2017, to Sept. 30, 2019. The Federal Perkins Loan Program is a campus-based student aid program through which colleges and universities provide subsidized, low-interest loans to undergraduate and graduate-professional students demonstrating financial need.

**Status:** H.R. 2482 was introduced by Rep. Elise Stafanik (R-NY-21) on May 17, 2017 and was referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

**AVMA Position:** Support

**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

---

**H.R. 3051, Educating Student Loan Borrowers Act**

This bipartisan legislation seeks to help federal student loan borrowers make smarter loan choices and better position themselves during the repayment process by requiring federal loan servicers to disclose annually to borrowers a description of available repayment plans, options for public service employees, and loan forgiveness and cancelations options. Note: Current law requires entrance and exit financial counseling for college students borrowing to finance their education. Once completed, loan servicers are under no obligation to provide borrowers additional information on repayment options and forgiveness plans. As a result, some students fail to take advantage of financial strategies that would allow them to more quickly pay off their debt.

**Status:** H.R. 3051 was introduced by Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT) on June 23, 2017 and was referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

**AVMA Position:** Support

**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

---

**H.R. 3346, Student Opportunity Act**

This legislation would eliminate origination fees assessed when student loans are disbursed, create a new loan refinancing program for loans made under the Direct Loan Program and the FFEL Program, and lower interest rates. Also, the bill includes a provision to exempt loan forgiveness and discharge from gross income for income tax purposes. Note: The refinanced loan for federal student loans first disbursed before July 1, 2010 would have an administrative fee of not more than .5% and a fixed interest rate of the most recent 10-year Treasury note plus .5%. For loans issued after July 1, 2018, the interest rate for undergraduates would be equal to the 10-year
Treasury note plus .5% or 8.25%. For Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans for graduate and professional students, the interest rate would be equal to the June 10-year Treasury note plus .5% or 9.5%. For PLUS loans, the interest rate would be equal to the June 10-year Treasury note plus .5% or 10.5%. The IRS currently taxes federal student loan amounts that are forgiven through income-based repayment plans. This often leaves borrowers with a significant tax bill at the end of their 10 or 20-year or various repayment periods.

**Status:** H.R. 3346 was introduced by Rep. Al Lawson (D-FL-5) on July 20, 2017 and was referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and the House Ways and Means Committee.

**AVMA Position:** Support

**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

**H.R. 3390 / S. 1521, Student Loan Relief Act of 2017**

This legislation would eliminate origination fees, create a new loan refinancing program for loans made under the Direct Loan Program and the defunct Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program, and lower interest rates. Note: For Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans for graduate and professional students, the interest rate would be equal to the lesser of the 10-year Treasury note plus the Federal Reserve discount rate or 5%. For PLUS loans, the interest rate would be equal to the lesser of the 10-year Treasury note plus the Federal Reserve Discount rate or 6%. For new loans issued after July 1, 2018, the interest rate for undergraduates would be equal to the lesser of the 10-year Treasury note plus the Federal Reserve discount rate or 4%.

**Status:** H.R. 3390 was introduced by Rep. Kathy Castor (D-FL-14) on July 25, 2017 and referred to House Education and the Workforce Committee. S. 1521 was introduced Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) on July 10, 2017 was referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

**AVMA Position:** Support

**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

**H.R. 3554 / S. 1712, The SIMPLE Act**

The Streamlining Income-driven, Manageable Payments on Loans for Education Act would ease the process of enrolling in an income-driven repayment (IDR) plan. The legislation provides for automatic recertification of borrowers’ incomes while they are enrolled in IDR plans to prevent unexpected increases in loan payments. It automates the income-monitoring process for borrowers whose loans are discharged because of disability.

**Status:** H.R. 3554 was introduced by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR-1) on July 28, 2017 and referred to House Education and the Workforce Committee and Ways and Means Committee. S. 1712 was introduced Sen. Ron Wyden(D-OR) on Aug. 2, 2017 was referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

**AVMA Position:** Support

**Primary Contact:** Alex Sands

**H.R. 3630, Student Loan Borrower’ Bill of Rights Act**

The legislation would allow Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program forgiveness of half of eligible loan debt after five years of service and permit Parent PLUS loans to be repaid through income-based repayment and forgiven through PSLF. The bill would also provide bankruptcy protections for federal and private student loans. It reestablishes a six-year statute of limitations on student loan debt collection, and prohibits the garnishment of wages, tax refunds, and Social Security benefits. The bill also prohibits loan default from preventing a student from accessing transcripts or other certifications or from being used against a borrower in a Federal or State proceeding involving the individual's professional or vocation license. Finally, the bill excludes student loan discharge or forgiveness from the calculation of gross income for income tax purposes. **Note:** Currently, student loans cannot be discharged through the normal bankruptcy process. Student loan borrowers are required to initiate an adversary proceeding (a separate lawsuit filed within the bankruptcy case) in which they must prove that repaying student loan debt would be an "undue hardship." Congress did not provide guidance on what
constitutes an undue hardship so most courts apply what the "Brunner standard" requiring borrowers to prove three things: 1) that they cannot maintain a minimal standard of living based on current income and expenses; 2) additional circumstances indicate this is likely to be the case for a significant portion of their repayment period; and 3) they made a good faith effort to repay the loans. The need for a separate proceeding and the stringency with which courts apply this standard make it virtually impossible for borrowers to discharge their student loans.

Status: H.R. 3630 was introduced by Rep. Frederica Wilson (D-FL-24) on July 28, 2017 and referred to House Education and the Workforce Committee; the Ways and Means Committee; the Judiciary Committee and the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Alex Sands

H.R. 3446/S. 1649 Restoring Board Immunity Act of 2017(RBI Act)

H.R. 3446/S. 1649 would help States combat abuse of occupational licensing laws by economic incumbents, to promote competition, to encourage innovation, to protect consumers, and to facilitate the restoration of antitrust immunity to State occupational boards,

Status: H.R. 3446 was introduced on July 27, 2017 by Rep. Darrell Issa, (R-CA-49) and referred to the House Judiciary Committee. On September 6, 2017, the legislation was referred to the Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial And Antitrust Law. On September 12, 2017, the subcommittee held a hearing on Occupational Licensing: Regulation and Competition. S. 1649 was introduced on July 27, 2017 by Senator Mike Lee(R-UT) and referred to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport
Primary Contact: Dr. Mark Lutschaunig

Monitoring

The AVMA is monitoring the following bills:
- S. 498 Battlefield Excellence through Superior Training (BEST) Practices Act
- H.R. 816 Federal Accountability in Chemical Testing (FACT) Act
- S. 503 Animal Welfare Accountability and Transparency
- H.R. 1274 State, Tribal, and Local Species Transparency
- H.R. 1406 Dog and Cat Meat Trade Prohibition Act
- H.R. 1108 Recall Unsafe Drugs Act of 2017
- H.R. 2603 Saving America’s Endangered Species Act (“SAVES Act”)
- H.R. 1127 Student Loan Fairness Act
- H.R. 3026 / S. 1412, Strengthening Loan Forgiveness for Public Servants Act
- H.R. 2725, Student Loan Lower Interest Rate and Lower Monthly Payment Refinancing Act of 2017
- H.R. 3572, Making College More Affordable Act

More Information

Get the latest information on current legislative issues by signing up for the monthly e-newsletter The AVMA Advocate and by visiting AVMA’s website under the “Advocacy” tab. You can take action on any of these bills by visiting AVMA’s Congressional Advocacy Network (AVMA-CAN) Web page. Be sure to follow the AVMA-CAN on Twitter @AVMACAN and Facebook at facebook.com/avmacan.