April 2017

We, the undersigned national and state veterinary medical organizations whose members are sworn to protect animal health and welfare while preventing and relieving animal suffering, write in strong opposition to H. R. 623, the misleadingly named “Fairness to Pet Owners Act.”

This legislation would place an unnecessary, undue burden on our members, the majority of which are small business owners. H.R. 623 would require a veterinarian to provide a written prescription each and every time a product is prescribed for a companion animal regardless of whether the client wants one.

To be clear, veterinary medicine supports a client’s choice to fill a prescription on- or off-site. We do not oppose providing a written prescription for clients who prefer to have it filled elsewhere. At the same time, veterinary medicine strongly opposes a federal mandate that would require providing a written prescription each time a product is prescribed, irrespective of the client's wishes.

For years, the American Veterinary Medical Association’s Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics has encouraged veterinarians to honor a client’s request for a written prescription. And state laws already govern veterinary prescription writing; in fact, a majority of states have laws or policies requiring a veterinarian to honor a client’s request for a copy of the prescription.

Historically, veterinary prescription products were only available through a veterinarian and were almost exclusively filled on-site, thus providing a written copy of a prescription was unnecessary. While some veterinary products remain available only at a veterinary clinic, there are now many online pharmacies and non- veterinary pharmacies that carry veterinary prescription products. After the Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act of 1994 allowed veterinarians to prescribe certain approved human drugs for animals, clients now have an option, when applicable, to choose between the animal and the human drug.

Veterinarians are the only professionals licensed to write a prescription for an animal. Due to a veterinarian’s unique education and training, we maintain that veterinarians are also the best-qualified professionals to provide guidance when dispensing prescription products for animals. At the same time, the veterinary and pharmacy professions are working together to address existing communication gaps and the pharmacists’ needs for additional information in veterinary pharmacology. The veterinary profession is fully engaged in this effort to ensure that our patients receive proper medications to promote their health and welfare.

We urge Congress to let our nation’s dedicated veterinarians continue their noble calling of providing the highest quality veterinary care and service without additional mandates from the federal government.

Please oppose the mandates put forth in H.R. 623, the Fairness to Pet Owners Act. Doing so is in the nation’s best interest. Please contact Dr. Ashley Morgan at amorgan@avma.org or 202.289.3210 if you have any questions or need further information.

Sincerely,
National Organizations

American Animal Hospital Association
American Association of Equine Practitioners
American Association of Feline Practitioners
American Veterinary Medical Association
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Avian Veterinarians
Association of Shelter Veterinarians
National Association of Federal Veterinarians

State Organizations

Alabama Veterinary Medical Association
Alaska State Veterinary Medical Association
Arizona Veterinary Medical Association
Arkansas Veterinary Medical Association
California Veterinary Medical Association
Colorado Veterinary Medical Association
Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association
Delaware Veterinary Medical Association
District of Columbia Veterinary Medical Association
Florida Veterinary Medical Association
Georgia Veterinary Medical Association
Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association
Idaho Veterinary Medical Association
Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association
Indiana Veterinary Medical Association
Iowa Veterinary Medical Association
Kansas Veterinary Medical Association
Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association
Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association
Maine Veterinary Medical Association
Maryland Veterinary Medical Association
Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association
Michigan Veterinary Medical Association
Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association
Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association
Missouri Veterinary Medical Association
Montana Veterinary Medical Association
Nebraska Veterinary Medical Association
Nevada Veterinary Medical Association
New Hampshire Veterinary Medical Association
New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association
New Mexico Veterinary Medical Association
New York State Veterinary Medical Society
North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association
North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association
Ohio Veterinary Medical Association
Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association
Oregon Veterinary Medical Association
Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association
Puerto Rico Veterinary Medical Association
Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association
South Carolina Association of Veterinarians
South Dakota Veterinary Medical Association
Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association
Texas Veterinary Medical Association
Utah Veterinary Medical Association
Vermont Veterinary Medical Association
Virginia Veterinary Medical Association
Washington State Veterinary Medical Association
West Virginia Veterinary Medical Association
Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association
Wyoming Veterinary Medical Association