AVMA's Governmental 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 113th Congress (Jan. 3, 2013-Jan. 3, 2015).
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Resources

AVMA’s Legislative Scoring System

AVMA prioritizes how it will address bills or regulations when they are posed in Congress. The scoring system uses the following five rankings:

- **Active Pursuit of Passage** – This means that a high priority application of AVMA resources will be expended to pass the bill.
- **Active Pursuit of Defeat** – This means that a high priority application of AVMA resources will be expended to stop the bill from becoming law.
- **Support** – This means that AVMA supports the bill; however, it is not a high priority. A low priority application of AVMA resources should be expended on the bill. However, if asked, AVMA is on record for supporting the bill.
- **Non-support** – This means that AVMA does not support the bill as written, and it is not a high priority. A low priority application of AVMA resources should be expended on the bill. However, if asked, AVMA is on record of not supporting the bill. 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.
- **No Action** – This means that AVMA has reviewed the bill, but has not taken a position. The Governmental Relations Division staff will continue to monitor the legislation and advise AVMA’s Legislative Advisory Committee should the legislation’s status change.

AVMA Governmental Relations Division Contacts

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

- Dr. Mark Lutschauign, director, 800-321-1473 ext. 3205, mlutschauign@avma.org
- Dr. Ashley Morgan, assistant director, 800-321-1473 ext. 3210, amorgan@avma.org
- Dr. Whitney Miller, assistant director, 800-321-1473 ext. 3211, wmiller@avma.org
- Gina Luke, assistant director, 800-321-1473 ext. 3204, gluke@avma.org
- Victoria Broehm, communications manager, 800-321-1473 ext. 3213, vbroehm@avma.org
- Stephanie Fisher, program manager and policy analyst, 800-321-1473 ext. 3208, sfisher@avma.org
**Issue Areas**

**Appropriations**

**Fiscal 2015 Agriculture Appropriations**
AVMA prioritizes some programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as “active pursuit of passage” and other programs as “support passage” during the Congressional appropriations process.

The following table provides a list of programs that the AVMA is actively pursuing federal funding.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)</td>
<td>$4,790,000</td>
<td>$4,800,000</td>
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*The House bill supports the NAHLN by funding the Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative (FADI). FADI funding would continue to be split three ways with 40 percent each going to support plant and animal diagnostic networks and 20 percent going to support the Extension Disaster Education Network. The House bill increases FADI funding to $7 million from $6.68 million.

**The Senate bill moves FADI funding and combines it with $1 million from APHIS Veterinary Diagnostics.

Learn more in AVMA's issue briefs:

- [Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)](#)
Other resources:

- On June 3, 2014, the Animal Agriculture Coalition (AAC) sent a letter to the House Committee on Appropriations regarding Fiscal Year 2015 Agriculture Appropriations.
- On March 28, 2014, the National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science sent a letter seeking $10 million for the Section 1433 Continuing Animal Health and Disease, Food Security, and Stewardship Research, Education and Extension Programs.
- On March 24, 2014, the Animal Agriculture Coalition (AAC) sent a letter that outlined a comprehensive list of U.S. Department of Agriculture programs and agencies that need funding because of their impact on animal health and the animal agriculture community.
- On March 18, 2014, the AVMA spearheaded a letter specifically seeking continued funding of $4.8 million for the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) and first-time funding for the Veterinary Services Grant Program (VSGP).
- On March 1, many state and national organizations signed onto a letter with the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians seeking $15 million for the new budget line authorized in the Farm Bill for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN).

**Status:** The Senate Appropriations Committee passed S. 2389 on May 22, 2014. The bill awaits consideration by the full Senate.

The House Appropriations Committee passed H.R. 4800 on May 29, 2014. The bill awaits consideration by the full House.

**AVMA Position:** Active Pursuit of Passage

**Primary Contact:** Gina Luke
Fiscal 2014 Agriculture Appropriations

AVMA prioritizes some programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as “active pursuit of passage” and other programs as “support passage” during the Congressional appropriations process.

The following table provides a list of programs that the AVMA is actively pursuing federal funding.

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<tr>
<td>Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP)</td>
<td>$4,400,000</td>
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<td>$1,074,000,000</td>
<td>$1,123,000,000</td>
<td>$1,122,482,000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Other resources:

- Letter from 15 U.S. Senators to Ag-Appropriations Committee Chair Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt urging them to increase support in fiscal 2014 for several important food safety initiatives, including FARAD, NAHLN, NARMS, and FSIS.


AVMA Position: Active Pursuit of Passage
Primary Contact: Gina Luke
Animal Health and Welfare Issues

H.R. 366/S. 666, the Animal Fighting Spectator Prohibition Act of 2013
This legislation amends the Animal Welfare Act to prohibit any person from knowingly attending an animal fighting venture or causing a minor under the age of 16 to attend such a venture. It sets civil and criminal penalties for violation.

Learn more in AVMA’s issue brief on H.R. 366/S. 666 and in AVMA's May 14, 2013, letter to Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas and Ranking Member Collin Peterson urging support for adding the animal fighting provision to the Farm Bill.

Status: Rep. Tom Marino (R-Pa.-10) introduced H.R. 366 on Jan. 23, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit, and to the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations. The House Farm Bill—H.R. 1947, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013—incorporated language similar to H.R. 366. This language was included in the stripped down Farm Bill (H.R. 2642) that passed the House on July 11, 2013.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) introduced S. 666 on April 8, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. The Senate-passed Farm Bill—S. 954, the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act—incorporated language similar to S. 666. S. 954 passed the Senate on June 10, 2013.


AVMA Position: Active Pursuit of Passage
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

H.R. 1518/S. 1406, Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act of 2013
This bill 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 3 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.

Learn more in AVMA’s issue brief on H.R. 1518/S. 1406, in AVMA’s testimony to Congress, and on the association’s website.

Status: Rep. Ed Whitfield (R-Ky.-1) introduced H.R. 1518 on April 11, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade. The subcommittee held a legislative hearing on Nov. 12, 2013, and AVMA’s Chief Executive and Executive Vice President Dr. Ron DeHaven testified. Read AVMA’s testimony here.
On July 31, 2013, Sens. Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.) and Mark Warner (D-Va.) introduced S. 1406 and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. The bill passed out of committee favorably on April 9, 2014, and the language was amended to match the language of H.R. 1518.

**AVMA Position:** Active Pursuit of Passage  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

**H.R. 4440/S. 1459, the Horse Transportation Safety Act of 2013**
This legislation amends Title 49 of the United States Code to prohibit the transportation of horses in interstate commerce in a motor vehicle (except a vehicle operated exclusively on rail or rails) containing two or more levels stacked on top of one another. The legislation also sets civil penalties for persons who knowingly violate the law.

Learn more in AVMA’s issue brief on H.R. 4440/S. 1459 and on the association’s website.

**Status:** Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.-9) introduced H.R. 4440 on April 9, 2014, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) introduced S. 1459 on Aug. 1, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

**AVMA Position:** Active Pursuit of Passage  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

**H.R. 4098/S. 2193, Horse Protection Amendments Act of 2013**
This legislation amends the Horse Protection Act to create one governing body, the Horse Industry Organization (HIO), 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. AVMA is opposed to this legislation for several reasons, including: the bill fails to make the actual act of soring illegal; the bill does not improve enforcement because it retains and enhances the walking horse industry’s self-policing system; and it does not ban action devices and performance packages, which are known to exacerbate or hide signs of soring.

Learn more in AVMA’s issue brief on H.R. 4098/S. 2193.

**Status:** Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.-7) introduced H.R. 4098 on Feb. 26, 2014, and it has been referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) introduced S. 2193 on Apr. 1, 2014, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

**AVMA Position:** Active Pursuit of Defeat  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

**H.R. 1094/S. 541, Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act of 2013**
This legislation amends the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to prohibit the sale or transport of equines (horses and other members of the equidae family) or their parts (including flesh, meat, and viscera), and/or the importing or exporting of equines or their parts into or beyond the United States by any person who knows, or should have known, that such equines are to be slaughtered for human consumption as food.

Learn more in AVMA’s issue brief on H.R. 1094/S. 541.
**Status:** Rep. Patrick Meehan (R-Pa.-7) introduced H.R. 1094 on March 12, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, and to the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit.

Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.) introduced S. 541 on March 12, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

**AVMA Position:** Active Pursuit of Defeat  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

**H.R. 847/S. 395, Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety (PUPS) Act**
This legislation amends the Animal Welfare Act to require the licensing and inspection of dog breeders who sell more than 50 dogs per year directly to the public. In addition, the legislation requires that dogs in commercial breeding facilities have the appropriate space and opportunity for daily exercise.

**Status:** Rep. Jim Gerlach (R-Pa.-6) introduced H.R. 847 on Feb. 27, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit.

Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) introduced S. 395 on Feb. 27, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

**H.R. 1731/S. 820, Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments of 2013**
This legislation amends the Egg Products Inspection Act to provide a uniform standard for the housing and treatment of egg-laying hens. Provisions in the legislation include: directing a phase-in of required floor space and adequate environmental enrichments (known as “enriched colony housing”); placing a prohibition on how often farmers can withdraw feed and water to induce molting cycles in hens; setting the level of acceptable air quality as not more than 25ppm of ammonia; requiring the use of euthanasia methods that have been deemed “acceptable” by the American Veterinary Medical Association; setting labeling definitions that indicate the type of housing that the egg-laying hens were provided during egg production; and outlining the phase-in period for conversion to the new housing and enrichment standards.

**Status:** Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.-5) introduced H.R. 1731 on April 25, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) introduced S. 820 on April 25, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

**H.R. 2847, Wounded Warrior Service Dog Act of 2013**
This bill establishes a grant program to encourage the use of assistance dogs by certain members of the Armed Forces and veterans with certain recognized disabilities.

**Status:** Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.-2) introduced H.R. 2847 on July 30, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Armed Forces, Subcommittee on Readiness, and to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee on Health.
AVMA Position: Support  
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

H. Res. 116, K-9 Veterans Day Resolution
This resolution expresses support for the designation of a K-9 Veterans Day and for efforts to recognize the service of military working dogs and their handlers.

Status: Rep. Gary Peters (D-Mich.-14) introduced H. Res. 116 on March 26, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

AVMA Position: Support  
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

H.R. 1998/S. 1381, Big Cats and Public Safety Protection Act
This legislation’s stated goal is to further the conservation of certain wildlife species by amending the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, which was enacted as part of the Lacey Act. The bill would prohibit private possession of big cats except at certain facilities, such as accredited zoos. It requires any person who currently owns a big cat to register the animal with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in order to keep the cat in their possession. The bill would also outlaw the breeding of any big cat except at accredited zoos and research and educational institutions. Violators of the law could have their animals confiscated along with any vehicles or equipment used to aid in their illegal activity and could face penalties, including fines as much as $20,000, and up to five years in jail.

Status: Rep. Howard McKeon (R-Calif.-25) introduced H.R. 1998 on May 15, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs.  
Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) introduced S. 1381 on July 29, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The committee held a legislative hearing on S. 1381 on July 16, 2014.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport  
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

H.R. 2158, Expedited Departure of Certain Snake Species Act
This bill requires a “qualified stop” of a covered snake (Burmese python, Indian python, Northern African python, Southern African python, and Yellow anaconda) to be treated as not occurring in interstate commerce for purposes of the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981. Currently, the export of these snakes may occur only through designated ports as defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, so when an aircraft departs with an export from one of these ports, it may not land within the United States. HR 2158 would continue to allow for export from 17 designated ports. In addition, it would allow such carriers to make intermediate stops in other states prior to final departure within a 48-hour time period as long as secure containment protocols are maintained. The bill does not address interstate transport.

Status: Rep. John Fleming (R-La.-4) introduced H.R. 2158 on May 23, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs. The subcommittee held a legislative hearing on July 25, 2013. The bill passed favorably by the committee on July 16, 2014.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport  
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller
H.R. 2224, Pet Safety and Protection Act of 2013
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.

Status: Rep. Michael Doyle (D-Pa.-14) introduced H.R. 2224 on June 3, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

H.R. 2856/S. 1463, Captive Primate Safety Act
This bill amends the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to add nonhuman primates to the definition of “prohibited wildlife species” for purposes of prohibiting the sale or purchase of such species in interstate and foreign commerce. The bill makes it unlawful for a person to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase a live animal of any prohibited wildlife species in interstate or foreign commerce (i.e., for pet trade purposes). It also sets exceptions to such prohibition, including, under certain conditions, for: (1) transporting a nonhuman primate to or from a veterinarian; (2) transporting a nonhuman primate to a legally designated caregiver as a result of the death of the preceding owner; and (3) transporting a single primate of the genus Cebus that was obtained from and trained by a charitable organization to assist a permanently disabled individual with a severe mobility impairment. The exception for the use of nonhuman primates as service animals conflicts directly with AVMA’s policy on Nonhuman Primates as Assistance Animals and indirectly with AVMA’s policy on Ownership or Possession of Wild Animals and their Hybrids.

Status: Rep. Michael Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.-8) introduced H.R. 2856 on July 30, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs. Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) introduced S. 1463 on Aug. 1, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The bill passed favorably out of committee on July 30, 2014.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

H.R. 3172, Battlefield Excellence through Superior Training (BEST) Practices Act
Requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to phase out animal-based training methods in the treatment of combat trauma injuries. Requires that by Oct. 1, 2018, the DoD use only human-based training methods for such purposes.

Status: Rep. Henry Johnson (D-Ga.-4) introduced H.R. 3172 on Sept. 25, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

H.R. 3513, Refuge from Cruel Trapping Act
This bill 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:** Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.-17) introduced H.R. 3513 on Nov. 15, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs.

**AVMA Position:** Nonsupport  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

**H.R. 3556, Humane Care for Primates Act of 2013**  
This bill would change existing rules to allow for the importation of nonhuman primates (i.e. chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, macaques, and numerous other species) into the United States by a certified primate sanctuary for purposes of providing lifetime shelter and care. Currently, nonhuman primates can only be imported for scientific, education, or exhibition purposes. Requires the establishment of a process for the certification of facilities as primate sanctuaries for purposes of the importation, shelter, and care of nonhuman primates.

**Status:** Rep. Renee Ellmers (R-N.C.-2) introduced H.R. 3556 on Nov. 20, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health.

**AVMA Position:** Nonsupport  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

**H.R. 4524, Animal Emergency Planning Act**  
This legislation would amend the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) to require that “covered persons” develop and implement emergency contingency plans for animals. Those covered persons include: research facilities, exhibitors, dealers, carriers and intermediate handlers. Contingency plans must provide for the humane handling, treatment, transportation, housing and care of its animals in the event of an emergency or disaster. It also requires the training of personnel and an annual review of the emergency plans.

**Status:** Rep. Dina Titus (D-Nev.-1) introduced H.R. 4524 on April 30, 2014, and it was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

**H.R. 4525, Traveling Exotic Animal Protection Act**  
This bill would amend the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) so that no exhibitor may allow for the participation of an exotic or wild animal (including a non-human primate) in an animal act if that animal had traveled in a mobile housing facility in the previous 15 days. The law will not apply to accredited zoos and aquariums with certain restrictions; a university, college, laboratory or other facility registered pursuant to section 6 of AWA; animals to be used for film, television or advertising; or rodeos.

**Status:** Rep. Jim Moran (D-Va.-8) introduced H.R. 4525 on April 30, 2014, and it was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit.

**AVMA Position:** Nonsupport  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller
H.R. 183, Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act
This bill directs the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program that will assess the effectiveness of using service dogs to assist post-deployment mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in veterans with disabilities as part of their therapy. The legislation requires that such a program be carried out within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ medical centers, which can provide training areas to carry out the program.

**Status:** Rep. Michael Grimm (R-N.Y.-11) introduced H.R. 183 on Jan. 4, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee on Health.

**AVMA Position:** No Action  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

H. Res. 208, Expressing Opposition to Gas Chambers
This resolution expresses: (1) disapproval of the use of gas chambers to euthanize shelter animals and (2) support for the enactment of state laws requiring the use of euthanasia by injection with sodium pentobarbital as the standard method of euthanasia for all animal shelters. It encourages states to allow licensed shelters to purchase necessary euthanasia drugs, subject to appropriate training and certification.

**Status:** Rep. Jim Moran (D-Va.-8) introduced H. Res. 208 on May 8, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit.

**AVMA Position:** No Action  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

H. Res. 433, Expressing Dissatisfaction with the use of Gas Chambers
This resolution expresses dissatisfaction that the practice of using gas chambers to euthanize stray cats and dogs continues in the United States in the 21st century.

**Status:** Rep. Lou Barletta (R-Pa.-11) introduced H. Res. 433 on Dec. 5, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit.

**AVMA Position:** No Action  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

S. 1550, Battlefield Excellence through Superior Training (BEST) Practices Act
Requires the Department of Defense (DoD) to phase out animal-based training methods in the treatment of combat trauma injuries. Requires that by October 1, 2018, the DoD use only human-based training methods for such purposes. Provides an exception when the Secretary of Defense determines that human-based training methods will not provide an educationally equivalent or superior substitute for live animal-based training methods.

**Status:** Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) introduced S. 1550 on Sept. 25, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

**AVMA Position:** No Action  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller
Expected legislation: To amend the Animal Welfare Act to provide for the protection of birds, rats, and mice, and for other purposes.  
This legislation designates an "animal" in the Animal Welfare Act as a bird, a rat of the genus Rattus, or a mouse of the genus Mus, which is being used, or is intended for use, as a pet or for research, testing, experimentation, or exhibition purposes.

Status: This legislation has not yet been introduced.

AVMA Position: No Action
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

Conservation and Environmental Issues

H.R. 39, Multinational Species Conservation Funds Reauthorization Act of 2013
This legislation authorizes appropriations to carry out the African Elephant Conservation Act, the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994, and the Asian Elephant Conservation Act of 1997 for fiscal 2014 through fiscal 2018. The authorized funds are used for the conservation of these species.

Status: Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska-At Large) introduced H.R. 39 on Jan. 3, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs.

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

H.R. 1328, Great Ape Conservation Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2013
This bill authorizes congressional appropriations to carry out the Great Ape Conservation Fund for fiscal 2014 through fiscal 2018. It amends the Great Ape Conservation Act of 2000 to allow the awarding of multi-year grants. It requires the Secretary of the Interior to convene a panel of experts to identify the greatest needs and priorities for the conservation of Great Apes.

Status: Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.-11) introduced H.R. 1328 on March 21, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs.

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

H.R. 1329, Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2013
This bill authorizes congressional appropriations to carry out the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund for fiscal 2014 through fiscal 2018. It expands marine turtle conservation assistance under the Marine Turtle Conservation Act of 2004 to include the United States and its territories.

Status: Rep. Pedro Pierluisi (D-Puerto Rico) introduced H.R. 1329 on March 21, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs.

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller
**H.R. 262/S. 231, Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Reauthorization Act**

This bill would reauthorize the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act of 2010 for four additional years, which would allow for five more stamp depictions to be created, including an African or Asian elephant, a rhinoceros, a tiger, a marine turtle, and/or a great ape. Funds raised from the semi-postal stamp are used to support conservation efforts.

**Status:** Rep. Michael Grimm (R-N.Y.-11) introduced [H.R. 262](#) on Jan. 15, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs. On June 25, 2014, the House Committee on Appropriations approved language similar to H.R. 262 as part of the draft Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill. The bill passed by the House of Representatives on Sept. 8, 2014. It was signed into law by the president on Sept. 19, 2014.

Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) introduced [S. 231](#) on Feb. 7, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. S. 231 passed favorably out of committee on June 25, 2014. The bill passed by the Senate on July 31, 2014.

**AVMA Position:** Support

**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

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**H.R. 996/S. 1153, Invasive Fish and Wildlife Prevention Act**

The goal of this bill is to establish an improved regulatory process that will prevent the introduction and establishment in the United States of nonnative or injurious wildlife and/or wild animal pathogens and parasites that are likely to cause harm.

**Status:** Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.-25) introduced [H.R. 996](#) on March 11, 2013, and it was referred to four House committees, including: the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs; the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations; the House Committee on Ways and Means; and the House Committee on the Budget.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) introduced [S. 1153](#) on June 12, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The committee held a legislative hearing on S. 1381 on July 16, 2014.

**AVMA Position:** Nonsupport

**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller

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**H.R. 2891, Medical Waste Management Act of 2013**

This bill would amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act to: (1) revise the definition of "medical waste;" (2) require the Environmental Protection Agency’s administrator to promulgate regulations listing the types of medical waste; and (3) require the EPA administrator to conduct a medical waste management program to protect human health and the environment from medical waste and promulgate regulations on tracking, labeling, packaging, storing, handling, monitoring, and disposing of medical waste. It requires those who generate medical waste to: (1) provide waste transporters with written assurance that the generator has complied with the EPA’s labeling, packaging, and storage requirements and a manifest form for its transportation; (2) register with the EPA administrator; and (3) provide the EPA administrator with the names of all waste transporters.

**Status:** Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.-6) introduced [H.R. 2891](#) on July 31, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy.
AVMA Position: Nonsupport
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

H.R. 2935/S. 1005, Conservation Reform Act of 2013
The stated goal of this legislation is to “establish more efficient and effective policies and processes for departments and agencies engaged in or providing support to, international conservation.” Specifically, the bill directs: the Government Accountability Office to audit, and report to Congress on, existing U.S. international conservation policies and programs; the president to establish an Interagency Working Group on International Conservation; the establishment of the International Conservation Public Advisory Board; and the president to work with foreign assistance donor countries in several specific areas.

Status: Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-Neb.-1) introduced H.R. 2935 on Aug. 1, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.
Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) introduced S. 1005 on May 22, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

AVMA Position: No Action
Primary Contact: Dr. Whitney Miller

Food Safety Issues

Congress has been working on the reauthorization of the new Farm Bill for nearly four years. The Farm Bill is a comprehensive bill that deals with federal policy for U.S. agriculture, including all programs and issues that are under the purview of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. AVMA’s primary focus centers on programs that are administered by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

Other resources:
- See AVMA’s chart outlining key provisions of interest for veterinary medicine for 2013.
- Learn more in AVMA’s issue brief on the Farm Bill.
- Read AVMA’s op-ed in The Hill: Veterinarians Need a Farm Bill, Too.
- View the letter the AVMA sent to Members of the Committee on Agriculture here - October 31, 2013.
- View the letter that 531 organizations, including the AVMA, sent to House Speaker John Boehner - July 2, 2013.

Status: H.R. 1947 was signed into Public Law 113-79 by President Obama on Feb. 7, 2014.

AVMA Position: Active Pursuit of Passage
Primary Contact: Gina Luke

H.R. 584/S. 248, Genetically Engineered Fish Labeling
This legislation amends the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require labeling of genetically engineered fish.

Learn more in AVMA’s issue brief on H.R. 584/S. 248.
**Status:** Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska-At Large) introduced [H.R. 584](https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/584) on Feb. 8, 2013, and it was referred to the House Subcommittee on Health.


**AVMA Position:** Nonsupport  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Ashley Morgan

### S. 1502, Safe Meat and Poultry Act
This bill amends the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act to include in the definition of "adulterated," a product bearing or containing a pathogen or contaminant associated with serious illness or death.

**Status:** Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) introduced S. 1502 on Sept. 12, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

**AVMA Position:** Nonsupport  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Ashley Morgan

### H.R. 4966, Pathogen Reduction and Testing Reform Act
This bill amends the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act and the Egg Products Inspection Act to provide that meat, poultry and egg products containing certain pathogens or contaminants are adulterated and to require sampling and testing for said pathogens or contaminants.

**Status:** Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.-3) introduced H.R. 4966 on June 25, 2014, and it was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture.

**AVMA Position:** Nonsupport  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Ashley Morgan

### H.R. 1313/S. 632, To amend the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act to repeal a duplicative program relating to the inspection and grading of catfish
This bill repeals a provision within the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 which establishes an inspection and grading program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture for catfish and other species of farm-raised fish. The provision has been in effect since the enactment of the Act. The Food and Drug Administration currently inspects all commercial seafood.

**Status:** Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-Mo.-4) introduced [H.R. 1313](https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/1313) on March 21, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit.


**AVMA Position:** No Action  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Whitney Miller
Pharmaceutical Issues

H.R. 1528/S. 1171, Veterinary Medicine Mobility Act
This legislation amends the Controlled Substances Act to allow a veterinarian to transport and dispense controlled substances in the usual course of veterinary practice outside of their registered locations.

Learn more in AVMA’s issue brief on H.R. 1528/S. 1171 and on the association’s website.


Sens. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) and Angus King (I-Maine) introduced S. 1171 on June 17, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary. S. 1171 passed the Senate by unanimous consent on Jan. 8, 2014. The Senate passed H.R. 1528 by unanimous consent on July 16, 2014.

AVMA Position: Active Pursuit of Passage
Primary Contact: Dr. Ashley Morgan

H.R. 4023, 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 or require the pet owner to sign a waiver or disclaim liability. AVMA was opposed to similar legislation, H.R. 1406, in the 112th Congress.

Learn more in AVMA’s issue brief on H.R. 4023 and on the association’s website.

Status: U.S. Reps. Jim Matheson (D-Utah-4) and Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah-3) introduced H.R. 4023 on Feb. 10, 2014, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade.

AVMA Position: Active Pursuit of Defeat
Primary Contact: Dr. Ashley Morgan

H.R. 1150, Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA) of 2013
The purpose of this bill is to amend the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to preserve the effectiveness of medically important antimicrobials used in the treatment of human and animal diseases. The bill would require an applicant that is seeking approval of a new animal drug that is a medically important antimicrobial to demonstrate that there is a reasonable certainty of no harm to human health due to the development of antimicrobial resistance attributable to the nontherapeutic use of the drug. The bill would also prohibit the administration of a medically important antimicrobial (including by means of animal feed) to a food-producing animal for nonroutine disease control unless there is a significant risk that a disease or infection present on the premises will be transmitted to the food-producing animal. It requires the administration of the microbial to be: (1) necessary to prevent or reduce the risk of transmission; (2) for the shortest duration possible to prevent or reduce the risk of transmission; and (3) at a scale no greater than the barn, house, or pen level and to the fewest animals possible to prevent or reduce the risk of transmission.
Learn more in AVMA’s issue brief on H.R. 1150.

**Status:** Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.-25) introduced H.R. 1150 on March 15, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health.

**AVMA Position:** Active Pursuit of Defeat  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Ashley Morgan

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**S. 1256, Preventing Antibiotic Resistance Act (PARA) of 2013**
The purpose of this bill is to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to preserve the effectiveness of medically important antimicrobials used in the treatment of human and animal diseases. The bill would require an applicant that is seeking approval of a new animal drug that is a medically important antimicrobial to demonstrate that there is a reasonable certainty of no harm to human health due to the development of antimicrobial resistance attributable to the nontherapeutic use of the drug. The bill would also prohibit the administration of a medically important antimicrobial (including by means of animal feed) to a food-producing animal for nonroutine disease control unless there is a significant risk that a disease or infection present on the premises will be transmitted to the food-producing animal. It requires the administration of the microbial to be: (1) necessary to prevent or reduce the risk of transmission; (2) for the shortest duration possible to prevent or reduce the risk of transmission; and (3) at a scale no greater than the barn, house, or pen level and to the fewest animals possible to prevent or reduce the risk of transmission. It is also the sense of the Senate that a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship should exist to ensure that medically important antimicrobials are used in a manner that is consistent with professionally accepted best practices.

Learn more in AVMA’s issue brief on S. 1256.

**Status:** Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) introduced S. 1256 on June 27, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

**AVMA Position:** Active Pursuit of Defeat  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Ashley Morgan

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These pieces of legislation amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to reauthorize programs that will collect user fees from companies to facilitate the Food and Drug Administration’s review of new animal drugs and generic new animal drugs.

**Status:** Rep. John Shimkus (R-Ill.-15) introduced H.R. 1407 on April 9, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health. Rep. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.-4) introduced H.R. 1408 on April 9, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health.
Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) introduced S. 622 on March 20, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

All three of these bills were signed into law on June 13, 2013, as Public Law 113-014.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Ashley Morgan
H.R. 2285, Strategies to Address Antimicrobial Resistance (STAAR) Act of 2013
This bill amends the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize through fiscal 2018 and revise a program to combat antimicrobial resistance. Among other things, it would also require the Health and Human Services secretary to establish: an Antimicrobial Resistance Office, which would consult with the Food and Drug Administration on any pending applications of new human or animal antimicrobial drugs; and a Public Health Antimicrobial Advisory Board, which would make recommendations to the HHS secretary regarding issues such as research priorities and implementation of a Public Health Action Plan to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance.

Learn more in AVMA's issue brief on H.R. 2285.

Status: Rep. Jim Matheson (D-Utah-4) introduced H.R. 2285 on June 6, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Dr. Ashley Morgan

H.R. 820, Delivering Antimicrobial Transparency in Animals (DATA) Act of 2013
This bill amends the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to enhance the reporting requirements pertaining to the use of antimicrobial drugs in food animals.

Status: Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.-33) introduced H.R. 820 on March 1, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport
Primary Contact: Dr. Ashley Morgan

S. 895, Antimicrobial Data Collection Act
This bill amends the Public Health Service Act to enhance efforts to address antimicrobial resistance. The bill would require the secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a research program that studies the relationship between the sales, distribution and end-use practices of animal drugs containing an antimicrobial ingredient in food-producing animals and antimicrobial resistance trends. It would also require the secretary to analyze the data to determine how it contributes to the study of antimicrobial resistance and establish an antimicrobial data collection strategy.

Status: Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) introduced S. 895 on May 8, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

AVMA Position: Nonsupport
Primary Contact: Dr. Ashley Morgan

S 2825, Ensuring Safe Access to Prescription Medication Act
The bill would amend the Controlled Substances Act to include the delivery of a controlled substance by a pharmacy to a practitioner, pursuant to a patient-specific prescription of the practitioner, in its definition of “dispensing.” A determination would also have to be made by the practitioner that it is medically necessary for the controlled substance to be administered by the practitioner to the patient.

Status: Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) introduced S. 2825 on Sept. 16, 2014, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.
Research Issues

**S. 859, Animal and Public Health Protection Act**
This provision will provide the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) with the ability to conduct activities related to detecting and responding to animal health threats. The bill authorizes $15 million for the NAHLN. The provision also authorizes resources to tackle the NAHLN’s genuine need to enhance its infrastructure, personnel, information technology, and quality assurance. A robust NAHLN will help control any potential disease outbreaks, limit the spread of diseases to other animals and, as a result, limit the diseases’ impact on public health, animal suffering, interruption of food supply, and the financial health of livestock and related industries.


Before the Farm Bill conference report, the Senate included the provision in its Farm Bill (S. 954), which passed on June 10, 2013.

**AVMA Position:** Active Pursuit of Passage  
**Primary Contact:** Gina Luke

**S.1552, Next Generation Research Act**
This legislation would establish the Next Generation of Research Initiative within the Office of the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The initiative would be responsible for coordinating all of NIH’s policies and programs aimed at promoting and providing opportunities for new researchers.

**Status:** Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) introduced S. 1552 on Sept. 26, 2013, and it was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

**AVMA Position:** Active Pursuit of Passage  
**Primary Contact:** Gina Luke

**H.R. 2671/ S. 1280, Charitable Agriculture Research Act (CARA)**
This legislation would recognize qualified agricultural research organizations as eligible for non-profit status [501(c)(3)] within the Internal Revenue Code. This classification will in turn result in an influx of philanthropic funds for agricultural research.

**Status:** Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.-22) introduced H.R. 2671 on July 11, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) introduced S. 1280 on July 11, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

**AVMA Position:** Active Pursuit of Passage  
**Primary Contact:** Gina Luke
S. Res. 373, a resolution recognizing the importance of biosecurity and agro-defense
This resolution reminds lawmakers that addressing critical vulnerabilities in the nation’s food supply and agriculture economy remains a top priority. Congress needs to consider measures to improve biosecurity and protect plant and animal health, including continuing the construction of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). The NBAF will bring the nation’s animal disease diagnostic and research capabilities into the 21st century. By constructing this new, state-of-the-art, high-containment facility, researchers will be better equipped to study foreign animals and emerging and zoonotic diseases that threaten U.S. animal agriculture and public health. When built, the NBAF will be the first lab in the United States to have a bio-safety level 4 containment to conduct research on diseases that could greatly impact large animals.

Status: S. Res. 373 was passed in the Senate by unanimous consent on the same day it was introduced by Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kansas).

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Gina Luke

Foundation for Food and Agriculture
The Senate Farm Bill (S. 954) included a provision that would establish a Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR). It directs the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to establish the FFAR to support the USDA’s agricultural research on key problems of national and international significance, and to foster collaboration with agricultural researchers from the federal government, institutions of higher education, industry, and nonprofit organizations. The bill directs the foundation to: award grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, scientists and entities to advance the foundation’s goals; identify and coordinate existing and proposed federal research and development programs relating to the foundation’s purposes; identify unmet and emerging agricultural research needs; facilitate technology transfer and information release to the agricultural research community; and promote the development of the next generation of agricultural research scientists.


AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Gina Luke

H.R. 610, Lyme Advisory Committee
This bill provides for the establishment of the Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee. The committee would advise the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary for Health regarding the manner in which they can: (1) ensure interagency coordination and communication and minimize overlap regarding efforts to address tick-borne diseases; (2) identify opportunities to coordinate efforts with other federal agencies and private organizations addressing such diseases; (3) ensure interagency coordination and communication with constituency groups; (4) ensure that a broad spectrum of scientific viewpoints is represented in public health policy decisions and that information disseminated to the public and physicians is balanced; and (5) advise relevant federal agencies on priorities related to Lyme and tick-borne diseases.

Status: Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ-4) introduced H.R. 610 on Feb. 12, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health.

AVMA Position: No Action
Primary Contact: Dr. Ashley Morgan
**H.R. 611/S. 719, Lyme Disease Prevention, Education and Research**
This legislation provides for the expansion of federal efforts concerning the prevention, education, treatment, and research activities related to Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, including the establishment of a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee.

**Status:** Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.-4) introduced H.R. 611 on Feb. 12, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health.

U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) introduced S. 719 on April 11, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

**AVMA Position:** No Action
**Primary Contact:** Dr. Ashley Morgan

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**Small Business Issues**

**H.R. 684/S. 743, Marketplace Fairness Act of 2013**
This legislation would give states the authority to manage their sales tax laws, closing the loophole that currently prohibits states from collecting sales and use taxes that are owed on purchases from out-of-state online vendors. Some states have incurred budget shortfalls as a result of sales taxes on online purchases going uncollected. AVMA is part of the Marketplace Fairness Coalition, which is comprised of more than 200 businesses and trade associations from across the country that supports federal legislation that will empower states to update their sales and use tax laws to level the playing field for all sellers.


**Status:** Rep. Steve Womack (R-Ark.-3) introduced H.R. 684 on Feb. 14, 2013, but the U.S. House has not yet taken up the bill. The Marketplace Fairness Coalition on June 28, 2013, sent a letter to House Judiciary Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.-6) and Ranking Member John Conyers (D-Mich.-13) urging them to schedule a hearing on marketplace fairness. AVMA, along with more than 300 organizations, sent a letter to Goodlatte again on Jan. 7, 2014, calling on Congress once again to tackle the important issue of tax reform.

Sen. Michael Enzi (R-Wyo.) introduced S. 743 on April 16, 2013, and the Senate passed the bill by a vote of 69-27 on May 6, 2013. S. 743 was referred to the House Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law on June 14, 2013.

**AVMA Position:** Support
**Primary Contact:** Gina Luke

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**H.R. 523, Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2013 / S. 232, Medical Device Access and Innovation Protection Act**
This legislation would repeal the excise tax on medical devices that was implemented as part of the healthcare reform legislation, most commonly referred to as “Obamacare.” The tax went into effect on Jan. 1, 2013, and impacts medical devices that are listed with the Food and Drug Administration as “intended for humans.” While the tax is not intended for devices that are developed exclusively for veterinary medicine, it does impact veterinary medicine as veterinarians often use medical devices that are “intended for humans.”

**Status:** Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-Minn.-3) introduced H.R. 523 on Feb. 6, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.
Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) introduced S. 232 on Feb. 7, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

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

### H.R. 892, S-Corp Modernization Act of 2013
H.R. 892 would: make it easier for S-corporations to access capital, modernize the rules that apply to firms that have selected S-corp status, and ease and expand S-corps’ ability to make charitable donations. Though it is unknown what percentage of veterinary practices are S-corps, a [2011 study on tax law](#) found that S-corps employ every one out of four workers in the U.S. private sector.

*Background:* An S-corp is a special structure of business ownership by which the business is able to avoid double taxation because it is not required to pay corporate income taxes on the profits of the company. All profits and losses are passed on directly to the shareholders of the company (currently limited to 35 shareholders). The shareholders then file individual tax returns and pay income taxes on whatever share of the profits they receive from the business, whether or not they are distributed. If the business has more than one shareholder, then the business must file an informational tax return to provide details of the corporate income of each shareholder. S-corps do not pay corporate taxes, which reduce their taxable gains, allows for write offs of start-up losses, and offers liability protection to shareholders.

**Status:** Rep. Dave Reichert (R-Wash.-8) introduced [H.R. 892](#) on Feb. 28, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Gina Luke

### H.R. 774, Small Business Start-up Savings Accounts Act of 2013
This legislation amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow businesses with 500 or fewer employees to be eligible to open a small business start-up savings account for the payment of certain business expenses, including the purchase of equipment or facilities, marketing, training, incorporation, and accounting fees. Contributions to the account would be capped at $10,000 per year and the total value of these accounts at any one time would be capped at $150,000. So long as money is used within five years of the first distribution, account holders would not be subject to fees or penalties. Account holders could use the funds for the costs of business creation or expansion, such as the purchase of equipment or facilities, marketing, training, incorporation or accounting cost.

**Status:** Rep. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.-4) introduced [H.R. 774](#) on Feb. 15, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

**AVMA Position:** Support  
**Primary Contact:** Gina Luke

### S. 193, Startup Innovation Credit Act of 2013
This bill amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow a qualified small business to use a portion of its tax credit for increasing research expenditures as an offset against its payroll tax liability under the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA). To qualify for the tax credit, a startup (a corporation, partnership, or S-corp) must be fewer than five years old and have less than $5 million in total revenues. The startup would be able to deduct the total amount it spent on research and development (R&D) up to $250,000 from its employment taxes the following year. The legislation allows qualifying companies to claim the R&D Tax Credit against their employment taxes, putting them against their W-2 instead of their income tax liability. That opens this tax credit
up to new companies who do not have an income tax liability. Typically, a business deducts its R&D expenses from its taxable profits, which means that any startup that has not yet started making a profit would not be able to use the current R&D tax credit. If a startup is not yet making profit, it will still be able to reap a reward for investing in innovation by deducting its R&D spending from its employment spending.

**Status:** Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) introduced S. 193 on Jan. 31, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

**AVMA Position:** Support

**Primary Contact:** Gina Luke

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**Veterinary Professional and Educational Issues**

**H.R. 1125/S. 553, Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act of 2013**

The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) provides loan repayment to veterinarians who agree to practice in shortage situations across the country, as designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This legislation would make the VMLRP loan repayment awards tax exempt, thereby increasing the number of veterinarians that could participate in the program. At present, the awards are taxed at a rate of 39 percent.

**Status:** Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.-5) introduced H.R. 1125 on March 13, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Sen. Tim Johnson (D-S.D.) introduced S. 553 on March 13, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

**AVMA Position:** Active Pursuit of Passage

**Primary Contact:** Gina Luke

**S. 113, Know Before You Owe Private Student Loan Act of 2013**

This bill amends both the Higher Education Act (HEA) and the Truth in Lending Act (TILA) to strengthen the requirements surrounding private student loans. The legislation would ensure that students understand the full range of their loan options they qualify for before they actually borrow.

**Status:** Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) introduced S. 113 on Jan. 23, 2013, and it was referred to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.

**AVMA Position:** Support

**Primary Contact:** Gina Luke

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**Veterinary Corps Officer Accession from Lieutenant to Captain**

All active duty veterinarians currently entering into the Army Veterinary Corps are commissioned at the rank of Captain. Army Reserve Veterinary Corps officers, however, are commissioned at the rank of First Lieutenant, unless they receive credit for their years worked in veterinary medicine after graduation (approximately 5-7 years, but the requirement varies). Physicians commissioned as Army Medical Corps officers enter active duty or the reserves at the rank of Captain. However, First Lieutenants in the U.S. Army Reserve Veterinary Corps are expected to perform the same duties and responsibilities as Captains, but they lack the same authority to carry out these tasks. In addition, military pay is related to rank. The AVMA supports legislation that would commission Army Reserve Veterinary Corps officers at the rank of Captain, which is consistent with the Association’s current federal equity in pay initiative.
H.R. 1716, Earnings Contingent Education Loans (ExCEL) Act of 2013
This bill establishes the Income Dependent Education Assistance (IDEA) Loan Program. Under the legislation, a borrower would pay a percentage of his or her discretionary income toward his or her student loan balance until the obligation is re-paid. The IDEA loans would require income-contingent repayment for all borrowers through a system of withholdings from earnings by the Internal Revenue Service, similar to federal tax withholdings. The repayment obligation would be 15 percent of income above 150 percent of the poverty line for the borrower’s household size, as reported in exemptions on the tax return. This legislation would combine the Subsidized Stafford, Unsubsidized Stafford and GradPLUS loans with a single, simple, income-contingent student loan.

Status: Rep. Thomas Petri (R-Wis.-6) introduced H.R. 1716 on April 24, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and the House Ways and Means Committee.

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Gina Luke

S. 1066 Federal Student Loan Refinancing Act
This bill will help borrowers manage educational debt by permitting them to refinance (or consolidate) their federal student loans at a fixed rate of 4 percent (with a one-time origination fee of 0.4 percent). The bill would retroactively apply to federal loans borrowed between July 1, 2006, and 90 days past the date of enactment. Federally-owned loans with a rate of less than 4 percent retain the lower rate.

AVMA Position: Support
Primary Contact: Gina Luke

H.R. 532, Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Act / S. 114, Fairness to Struggling Students Act
This legislation will make it possible for private student loan debt to be discharged in bankruptcy cases, just like any other private debt. AVMA has refrained from supporting this legislation and instead will support legislation that promotes responsible borrowing and/or that limits the cost of student loans.

Background: Federal loans have been ineligible for discharge in bankruptcy since 1978 to safeguard taxpayer money. Private student loans were eligible for bankruptcy discharge from 1978-2005 when Congress created special protections for private student loan lenders. In 2005, Congress changed the bankruptcy rules. Private student loans are different from federal loans in that federal student loans carry mostly favorable terms, lower interest rates, income-based repayment plans and more deferment and forbearance options. Private student loans often have double-digit interest rates and have no income-based repayment options.

Status: Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.-9) introduced H.R. 532 on Feb. 6, 2013, and it was referred to the House Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law.
Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) introduced S. 114 on Jan. 23, 2013, and it has been referred to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

AVMA Position: No Action
Primary Contact: Gina Luke
H.R. 2796, Wildlife VET Act
This bill aims to expand the workforce of veterinarians specialized in the care and conservation of wild animals by: developing educational programs focused on wildlife and zoological veterinary medicine; creating newly funded positions for wildlife and zoo clinical and research veterinarians; creating a loan repayment program to help limit the amount of educational debt of veterinary medical students that go into wildlife or zoological medicine; providing incentives to study and practice wildlife and zoological veterinary medicine; helping schools and colleges of veterinary medicine develop pilot 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 for veterinary students.

**Status:** Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-Fla.-20) introduced H.R. 2796 on July 23, 2013, and it was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development and Credit, and in addition to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs.

**AVMA Position:** Support
**Primary Contact:** Whitney Miller
More Information

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