

September 18, 2014

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. 4023/S. 2756, 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. 4023/S. 2756 would require a veterinarian to provide a written prescription each and every time a product is prescribed for a companion animal.

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 to provide a written prescription each time a product is prescribed, regardless of whether a client wants to go elsewhere.

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 a 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. 4023/S. 2756, 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 Feline Practitioners

American Veterinary Medical Association

Association of American Veterinary Medical

Colleges

Association of Avian Veterinarians

Association of Shelter Veterinarians

Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association

National Association of Federal Veterinarians

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

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

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