



## S. 1053, Veterinary Services Investment Act

### AVMA Ask:

- Become an **original cosponsor** of the Veterinary Services Investment Act.

### Purpose:

- Authorizes such sums as necessary, not to exceed \$10 million per year
- Amend the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 to direct the Secretary of Agriculture (USDA) to carry out a matching grant program with qualified entities to develop, implement, and sustain veterinary services.

### Status, Introduction, Referral and Administration:

- Status: S. 1053 was introduced on May 24 and referred to the Agriculture Committee.
- Sponsors: Debbie Stabenow D-MI and Thad Cochran R-MS
- Agency Administration: USDA NIFA.

### Congressional Budget Office Estimate:

- CBO estimated that implementing VSIA would cost \$38 million over the five-year authorization period and additional amounts to continue those efforts thereafter (est. completed during 111<sup>th</sup> Congress).
- Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

### Uses of Funds:

- Assistance for establishing or expanding veterinary practices or establishing mobile veterinary facilities;
- Veterinarian, technician, and student recruitment;
- Grants to attend training programs in food safety or food animal medicine;
- Grants to establish or expand accredited education, internship, residency, and fellowship programs;
- Grants to assess veterinarian shortage situations; and
- Grants for continuing education and extension, including tele-veterinary medicine and other distance-based education.

### Prohibited Uses of Funds:

- Construction of a new building/facility
- Acquisition of a building/facility
- Expansion/remodeling/alteration of existing building/facility
- Site grading and improvement
- Architect fees

### Who Is Qualified to Apply for VSIA Grant:

- For-profit or nonprofit entity in the U.S. that operates a rural veterinary clinic in response to a veterinarian shortage situation;
- State, national, allied, or regional veterinary organization or specialty board recognized by AVMA;
- College or school of veterinary medicine recognized by U.S. Department of Education;
- Department of veterinary science or department of comparative medicine recognized by the U.S. Department of Education;
- University research foundation or veterinary medical foundation;
- State agricultural experiment station;
- State, local, or tribal government agency.

### Funding Preference:

- Grantee is required to meet veterinary workforce or food protection needs.
- Grantee must document coordination between or with the state, national allied or regional veterinary organizations, or specialty boards recognized by AVMA; the applicable accredited veterinary education institution, or accredited department of veterinary science, or department of comparative medicine; or the applicable State veterinarian/SAHO (or its equivalent).
- Require a qualifying entity to carry out programs that: (1) relieve veterinarian shortage situations; (2) support private veterinary practices engaged in public health activities; or (3) support practices of veterinarians who are participating in or have successfully completed a specified service requirement.

*The AVMA is the recognized voice for the profession, representing over 81,500 member veterinarians. The objective of the AVMA is to advance the science and art of veterinary medicine including its relationship to public health, biological science, and agriculture.*

**Cost-Sharing Requirement:**

- Senate bill: Grant recipients are required to provide matching non-Federal funds, either in cash or in-kind support, in an amount equal to not less than 25% of the Federal funds provided.
- House bill: Grant recipients are required to provide matching non-Federal funds, either in cash or in-kind support, in an amount equal to not less than 50% of the Federal funds provided.

**Implementation:**

- Senate bill: Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall promulgate regulations to implement the grant program authorized under this section.
- House bill: No implementation provision.

**Justification:**

- A shortage of veterinarians and veterinary technicians presents problems for the U.S. food supply and food safety and for public safety.
- 187 USDA designated veterinary shortage areas in U.S.
- 1,300 counties have fewer than 1 food supply veterinarian/ 25,000 farm animals while more than 500 counties have at least 5,000 farm animals but no food supply veterinarian living there to treat them.
- Veterinarians are needed in nearly every area of veterinary medicine but particularly in food supply medicine and public health to treat livestock and poultry, the eradication of threatening diseases, and the monitoring of food safety and quality. There are serious consequences not only for the well-being of farmers and animals, but also potentially for food safety and zoonotic diseases like bird flu. Of all the emerging diseases in people in the last 25 years, 75% of those were transmitted from animals.

**History of the Legislation in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress**

- S. 1709 introduced by Senators Debbie Stabenow D-MI and John Thune R-SD on September 24, 2009. Referred to the Agriculture Committee. 34 bipartisan cosponsors.
- H.R. 3519 introduced by Representatives Adrian Smith R-NE-3 and Leonard Boswell D-IA-3 on July 31, 2009. Referred to the Agriculture Committee. 65 bipartisan cosponsors. September 15 passed on the suspension calendar by the House of Representatives and referred to the Senate Agriculture Committee.

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