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HB 501 – Proponent Testimony March 13, 2018

Chairman Hill, Vice-Chairman Koehler, Ranking Member Patterson and members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee:

My name is Dr. Peggy Williams and I am from Pataskala, Ohio. I am writing to ask you to support HB 501, which changes the title of “registered veterinary technician” to “registered veterinary nurse” in the Ohio Revised and Administrative Codes. It is jointly sponsored by Representatives LaTourette and Huffman and is pending in the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee.

As a graduate of The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 1978, I have been a general practitioner serving both companion and food animal clientele. I have also been an adjunct faculty member in the Columbus State Community College Veterinary Technology program since 1998 and a full time faculty member and the program coordinator since 2014.

I ask you to support HB 501 because the title “registered veterinary nurse” will allow Ohio’s universities, community colleges and career colleges who provide this degree to attract more students to their programs, as it again more accurately reflects the true nature of our services in the veterinary practice.

In my career as a veterinarian, I have witnessed the progression of credentials from the Animal Health Technician to today’s Registered Veterinary Technician. Those first AHT’s were on site trained employees, grandfathered into the profession along with the first program graduates of the Columbus Technical Institute, now Columbus State Community College, and similar programs. Currently, the American Veterinary Medical Association Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities accredited programs teach an extensive list of three hundred essential skills and tasks necessary as an entry level technician. As doctors, we rely on these professionals to be our “right hand”: triaging patients, assessing physical and vital signs, giving medications as prescribed, monitoring critical patients and response to therapies, collecting and performing laboratory diagnostics and imaging, preparing surgical patients and assisting in surgery, serving as the anesthetist as well as the dental hygienist.

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However, clients most commonly experience the empathy and compassionate talents of these professionals in the communication of patient treatment plans, updates on their beloved companion's condition, and follow-up on home progress and care. As this level of veterinary care for companion animals has evolved and continues to progress; the veterinary technician's role within the health care team has become ever more essential and the increasing employment demand reflects this. Additionally, technicians now serve the public health and food animal sectors by assisting with client education, food quality assurance programs, biosecurity and promoting animal welfare.

It is now time for a nationally standardized credential for these health team members which will provide the public and prospective students an easily recognized role and awareness of the veterinary nursing professional.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 501. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

Peggy S. Williams, DVM

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