



# Ohio Veterinary Medical Association

Interested Party Testimony on HB 33 – State Operating Budget

Dr. Eric Gordon, President

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The Honorable Jerry R. Cirino  
1 Capitol Square  
Ground Floor 034  
Columbus, OH 43215

Good morning, Chairman Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee. My name is Dr. Eric Gordon, and I currently serve as the President of the Ohio Veterinary Medical Association (OVMA). We are the non-profit trade association that represents the vast majority of Ohio's veterinarians, with over 2500 active members. Also, in my roles as professor of farm animal medicine and director of the Large Animal Services at Marysville, I see firsthand the importance and impact of veterinary medicine to animal agriculture as my colleagues and I provide veterinary services on farms in nearly 20 counties across Ohio.

I am here today to discuss GRF ALI 235569 of HB 33, the appropriation for The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Respectfully, I am here to ask for your support of amendment SC0568, which increases this appropriation by \$2.35 million in FY2024 and \$4.696 million in FY2025.

We understand and respect the deliberative process the legislature goes through to ensure that the state's resources are spent in a judicious manner, with an appropriate return on investments, thus making the most for all of Ohio's citizens. With this in mind, we do not make this request lightly, but we feel strongly that the veterinary profession is a high priority for Ohio with its direct impact on countless other industries. Let me be frank: this is not just an appropriation for an institution of higher education. The work of The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, Ohio's only veterinary college, directly impacts the entire veterinary profession through preparing and graduating veterinarians that serve Ohio, conducting important research that advances animal and human health, providing the most advanced care available for animals, educating and supporting youth and serving communities across the state through outreach activities. When veterinary medicine is funded, agriculture and animal health and reliability and safety in the food supply are supported. Additionally, with approximately 75% of Ohio households sharing their home with at least one pet, the families of your districts rely heavily on veterinarians to keep their furry friends safe and healthy. This funding will also help make a veterinary medical education more accessible and affordable for all Ohioans who in turn will serve Ohio's people and their animals.

Veterinarians work to keep livestock and poultry populations healthy and productive while safeguarding their welfare; ensuring an abundant and safe food supply; and preventing disease outbreaks that could be disastrous to the entire agricultural industry. The college established an Early Commitment Program over 15 years ago for up to ten undergraduate students per year who are interested in careers in farm animal veterinary medicine whereby faculty members provide customized mentorship to prepare them for

successful admission to veterinary school and future careers in farm animal medicine. This has and will continue to help establish a direct path to Ohio farms and a career in the agricultural industry. The College also partners with the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the State Veterinarian's Office to develop, educate and implement Emergency Preparedness protocols for detection, containment and prevention of infectious diseases that can cause outbreaks and devastate herds and flocks such as, African swine fever, and porcine epidemic diarrhea virus, foot and mouth disease, and highly pathogenic avian influenza.

With the requested increase we are seeking with amendment SC0568, the work of the College will be supported that much further. I also encourage you all to review the written testimony submitted to this committee by the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Rustin Moore. His testimony speaks to the specific ways to which this funding will be used by the College to benefit Ohio's animals, people and communities. Thank you for your time this morning, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.