



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
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House Bill 67
Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Corey Roscoe, Senior State Director

November 16, 2020

Chairman Hoagland and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources committee, on behalf of the Humane Society of the United States and our Ohio members and supporters thank you for the opportunity to provide Proponent testimony on HB 67 to establish a veterinary student loan assistance program.

House Bill 67 earned bi-partisan support in the House and passed the chamber by a vote of 92-2. If enacted, we have an opportunity to help pets, people and essential workers. House Bill 67 will help retain veterinarians in our state by providing a sustainable and fiscally responsible approach managed by the state veterinary medical licensing board to relieving the burden of student debt in the veterinary profession. In order to qualify for debt assistance, participants would agree to reside in the state and provide charitable veterinarian services to nonprofit animal welfare groups, humane societies, or government entities.

Under the bill, the state veterinary medical licensing board will establish procedures for the selection of veterinarian student debt assistance recipients, including the development of a lottery system for selecting who, from the list of eligible veterinarians, will receive assistance. The veterinary student loan assistance program funds will consist of licensing fees, money received from gifts or donations and other money contributed to the fund.

Ohio is fortunate to have such a wealth of veterinary professionals. Many veterinarians have excellent relationships with local animal welfare groups and currently provide in-kind veterinary services. These relationships are vital to numerous animal shelters that have a limited capacity and budget. By giving veterinarians an opportunity to reduce the burden of their veterinary student debt as detailed in this bill, these “essential workers” will be incentivized to stay in Ohio to continue to give back to pets and people in need.

We are grateful for the veterinary community in Ohio for all the ways they serve our pets and communities and especially during the pandemic. Thank you for your consideration of this meaningful legislation.