



TO: House Agriculture Committee; Representative Hoffman, Chair

FROM: Megan Kilgore, Kansas Veterinary Medical Association

RE: Oral testimony in support of HB 2552 - Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas

DATE: February 8, 2018

Chairman Hoffman and members of the Committee, on behalf of the Kansas Veterinary Medical Association I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit testimony before this committee in support of HB 2552 relating to the Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas.

The KVMA is the only statewide professional membership organization dedicated exclusively to veterinary medicine and the interests of the veterinary team. There is no more important role in serving Kansas rural communities and its farmers and ranchers than veterinarians.

In 2006, the Kansas legislature signed into law the Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas. The program authorized the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine to enter into agreements with up to five, first-year veterinary students who would be eligible for student loan forgiveness in exchange for practicing veterinary medicine in a rural Kansas community. The VTPRK was designed to incentivize Kansas students to remain in the state and fulfill the needs of our rural communities.

The same economic, gender and cultural challenges facing the Kansas veterinary profession and impacting the Kansas agricultural economy over ten years ago remain in effect today. HB 2552 proposes to expand the VTPRK program to no more than 20 students per year, and no less than 5. If administered correctly, this investment in Kansas veterinary graduates will provide much needed veterinary associates and practice owners in underserved areas of rural Kansas.

I urge the committee to support HB 2552. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.