

SB 1194

Measure Title:	RELATING TO VETERINARY MEDICINE.
Report Title:	Veterinary Medicine; License; Penalties
Description:	Makes violations of the practice of veterinary medicine without a license a class C felony.
Companion:	
Package:	None
Current Referral:	CPN, JDL

**PRESENTATION OF THE
BOARD OF VETERINARY EXAMINERS**

**TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2011**

**Thursday, February 3, 2011
9:00 a.m.**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO. 1194, RELATING TO VETERINARY MEDICINE.

**TO THE HONORABLE ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR,
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:**

My name is Lynn Bhanot, Executive Officer for the Board of Veterinary Examiners ("Board"). I appreciate the opportunity to present written testimony on behalf of the Board.

The purpose of this measure is to reclassify the practice of veterinary medicine without a license from a misdemeanor to a class C felony.

The Board has not had an opportunity to review the measure; however, we generally support proposals which enhance our mission, which is to protect the general public. The Board will be discussing this bill at its next scheduled meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 2011.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony on Senate Bill No. 1194.

SB 1194

Thursday, February 3, 2011

9:00am

Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection Conference Room 229, State Capitol

Dear Chair Senator Baker and committee members, I am in favor of SB 1194. SB 1194 will more strongly protect the general public from the activities of individuals whose gross incompetence threaten the lives of our companion animals. It is unfortunate that we have seen and experienced such inhumane activities.

A licensed veterinarian earns that title by, on the average, 9 years of college education at an accredited institution, as well as the successful completion of national and state administered examinations.

In addition, a minimum of 300 hours work experience is required before admission to professional school.

We love our profession, and it does bring great joy and satisfaction on a daily basis.

We work hard to solve problems while taking an oath to cause no harm.

It hurts to see the harm that can be done with a public unable to discern between false claims and honest advice.

Thank you for drafting SB 1194. We look forward to working with you and guiding its passage.

Eric Ako DVM

Owner, Practitioner, The PET DOCTOR

Executive Vice President, Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association Past Chair, Board of Veterinary Examiners, State of Hawaii Board Member, Hawaiian Humane Society

I am writing to give my full support to the passage of HB1133. It is so unfortunate and awful that this isn't already considered a felony. As secretary of Boxer Club of Hawaii, I regularly communicate with a large number of Hawaii Boxer owners looking for a veterinarian for ear cropping, tail docking, etc. I would be horrified if any of them used a veterinarian that was not licensed to perform such services. It is appalling to me to think that there is not real enforcement for such unethical practices. I never want to think there is a situation where one who does such procedures would be able to do so without significant retribution. I strongly urge you to pass this bill. Only when we hold individuals to the standards that are morally and ethically sound will this despicable practice end. It is not fair to the defenseless animals that have no voice when a botched and painful surgery takes place. Thank you for your time in reading this.

Sincerely,

Theresa Donnelly

Secretary, Boxer Club of Hawaii



improving the quality of lives of pets and their people.

Testimony by: Alicia Maluafiti, President, Poi Dogs & Popoki
SB 1194 – Relating to Veterinary Medicine
The Senate Committee Commerce and Consumer Protection
Thursday, February 3, 2011 - Room 229, 9:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Baker, Vice Chair Taniguch and members of the Committee,

My name is Alicia Maluafiti and I am the President of Poi Dogs & Popoki (PDP), a local nonprofit helping people and their pets with the cost of caring for their pets. I am also the former Director of Community Relations for the Hawaiian Humane Society and the founder and former president of the Oahu SPCA. PDP strongly supports SB 1194.

The purpose of this bill is to increase the penalty for practicing veterinary medicine without a license - from a misdemeanor to a Class C felony - which is parity with the penalties under Hawaii's animal cruelty statute. Conducting surgical procedures on pets without the necessary anesthesia - by people lacking the skill, education and license to do so - all the while taking advantage of naïve pet owners, is criminal and deserves to be penalized in the same degree as animal cruelty.

State licensing boards across the country are waging war against lay persons performing veterinary medicine, but with attorneys unwilling to prosecute and little means of enforcement, the problem continues to grow. Many states have passed laws making it a felony to practice veterinary medicine without a license - to not only serve as an incentive to prosecute cases, but to deter offenders.

Veterinarians are seeing more and more horrific damage done to animals by people who have no idea what they are doing – from sterilization surgery to ear cropping and tail docking to voice box removal. Most often, licensed veterinarians are sought after irreversible damage has been done and the life of the animal is at stake. Some pet owners unknowingly choose a non-licensed person because they learn that a medical procedure can be performed at a reduced cost, but not fully understanding the risks facing their pet. Lacking the education, skill set and knowledge of veterinary medicine, animals suffer from botched procedures that are done without the necessary and appropriate anesthesia, furthering the pain suffered by the pet. In cases where controlled substances are used, prescription drugs are secured illegally and dispensed and administered inappropriately. Hawaii needs to join other states in stopping the unscrupulous and callous actions of people that are cashing in on the pain and suffering of pets.

We ask you to please pass SB 1194. Mahalo for your caring and compassion for Hawaii's pets and their people.