

**Testimony of the Hawaii Board of Veterinary Medicine**

**Before the  
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Tuesday, February 8, 2022  
2:00 p.m.  
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:  
H.B. 1598, RELATING TO VETERINARY MEDICINE**

Chair Johanson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kerrie Shahan, and I am the Executive Officer of the Hawaii Board of Veterinary Medicine (Board).

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) authorize the Board to grant temporary courtesy and relief permits for out-of-state veterinarians; (2) permit licensed veterinarians to practice veterinarian telemedicine; and (3) to allow for international veterinary school graduates to qualify for licensure examination.

The Board will review this bill at its next publicly noticed meeting on February 11, 2022. While the Board has not had the opportunity to review the bill, it is in support of the intent of the measure. Specifically, the Board appointed two permitted interaction groups to research and review telemedicine and best practices for out-of-state visiting veterinarians, which this bill proposes. Also, the Board has had discussions about how new permits would impact the Professional and Vocational Licensing Division in terms of IT upgrades and additional operational and personnel costs.

In addition, the Board has previously expressed support of the acceptance of the PAVE certification for foreign graduates at several of its meetings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**HAWAII VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**  
**P.O. Box 61309, Honolulu, Hawaii 96839-1309**

February 5, 2022

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Representative Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair  
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

RE: HB 1598, Relating to Veterinary Medicine

Dear Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce,

On behalf of the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association (HVMA), I would like to express our strong support of HB 1598 and its strengthening of Hawaii's veterinary practice law.

HB 1598 amends Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 471 on Veterinary Medicine to better define the practice and parameters of veterinary medicine and veterinary telemedicine to protect consumers and their pets from inadequate, improper, or unlicensed veterinary care. In addition, it addresses the current shortage of veterinary specialists and practitioners in Hawaii by allowing the Board of Veterinary Medicine to grant temporary permits to out-of-state veterinarians and provides for international veterinary school graduates to qualify for licensure examination in Hawaii.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased consumer demand for telehealth in the field of veterinary medicine. Telemedicine has allowed consumers more access to veterinary services for their pets, particularly in areas where access to veterinary care is limited. However, HVMA is aware that the use of telemedicine may also be abused without an established veterinary-client-patient relationship. Without actual physical examination of a pet, veterinary services rendered through telemedicine alone can be inadequate and below the standard of veterinary care. The addition of telemedicine definitions and parameters will help to clarify the practice of veterinary telemedicine and assist the Hawaii Board of Veterinary Medicine in ensuring consumers in Hawaii receive proper and licensed veterinary telemedicine services.

Additionally, the pandemic highlighted the shortage of veterinarians available to provide specialty and routine veterinary care for Hawaii's people and their pets. At times, veterinary emergency hospitals were unable to operate 24/7 and surgeon schedules were completely booked for months due to the inability to fill these staffing shortages by temporary permit. In one specific case, there was a veterinary surgeon within the state that could have assisted during this period, but due to her international veterinary school degree, was unable to sit for Hawaii's state licensing exam due to a technicality in the administrative rules. These amendments are critically important to prevent such veterinary care shortages in the future, and to ensure that all qualified veterinarians are allowed to sit for the Hawaii state licensing exam.

The HVMA requests that HB 1598 be amended to include the following four changes:

1. To ensure consistency with federal (FDA) VCPR definition, the following telemedicine language definitions should be stated as:

Page 6

19 §471-D Telemedicine. (a) A veterinarian shall practice  
20 veterinary telemedicine within the context of the veterinarian-  
21 client-patient relationship between medically necessary

Page 7

1 examinations of a patient or medically appropriate and timely ~~medical~~ visits to the premises where the  
patient is kept.  
2 patient.

Page 10

19 of the medical condition of the patient, which means that the veterinarian is personally acquainted with  
the keeping and care of the patient and has recently physically examined the animal or made timely and  
medically appropriate visits to the premises where the patient is kept;

2. To ensure that state law will not conflict with federal guidance, the following language regarding health certificates should be stated as:

Page 8

17 (h) Nothing in this statute is intended to override federal or state requirements and standards  
for issuing Certificates of Veterinary Inspection or health certificates."  
A United States Department of Agriculture Animal and  
18 Plant Health Inspection Service Certificate of Veterinary  
19 Inspection or health certificate shall require a physical  
20 examination and shall not be executed by telemedicine."

3. To qualify human-caused disasters (such as oil spills, industrial accidents, or nuclear events) for emergency response, please include the following language:

Page 9

12 "Emergency response" means the response to a natural or human-caused  
13 disaster, animal rescue, or cruelty case that needs urgent  
14 attention.

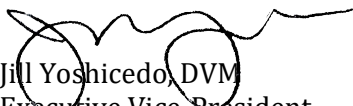
4. For accuracy in identifying the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Council on Education which has decisional independence from the AVMA on veterinary school standards, please include the full agency name as follows:

Page 16

14 (A) A veterinary college meeting all the standards  
15 established by the American Veterinary Medical  
16 Association Council on Education, or, in lieu thereof, has actively

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill and our amendment requests. Please SUPPORT HB 1598 and its fortification of Hawaii's veterinary practice law. Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

  
Jill Yoshicedo, DVM  
Executive Vice-President  
Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association



**Hawaiian Humane Society**  
*People for animals. Animals for people.*

2700 Waiialae Avenue Honolulu, Hawaii 96826  
808.356.2200 • [HawaiianHumane.org](http://HawaiianHumane.org)

Date: Feb. 4, 2022

To: Chair Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson  
Vice Chair Rep. Lisa Kitagawa  
and Members of the  
Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Public Policy Advocate  
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in strong support of HB 1598: Relating to Veterinary Medicine  
Tuesday, Feb. 8, 2022, 2 p.m., Via Videoconference

---

Aloha Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our enthusiastic support for House Bill 1598, which authorizes the board to grant temporary courtesy and relief permits for out-of-state veterinarians, permits licensed veterinarians to practice veterinarian telemedicine, and allows for international veterinary school graduates to qualify for the licensure examination.

This bill seeks to restore a pathway for out-of-state veterinarians, licensed in good standing, to assist our local veterinary community, and the pet owners and animals of Hawai'i. In late 2020, the Hawaii Board of Veterinary Medicine closed the existing pathway that allowed visiting veterinarians to practice in the state. It agreed to work with stakeholders to create a new system, one that meets the needs of our community while giving the board greater control over visiting veterinarians and clarifying that professionals who wish to work in the state regularly must apply for a Hawai'i license. This bill is the result of that collaborative effort.

HB 1598 will allow animals to get immediate care in the case of natural disasters or rescues, it will allow out-of-state veterinarians, licensed in good standing, to assist Hawai'i-licensed professionals and it will allow our local veterinarians some much needed respite. Its provisions protect animals, serve the interests of consumers and support access to high-quality veterinary care.

We urge the committee to pass HB 1598. Mahalo for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 12:27:03 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Marian Hussenbux	Animal Interfaith Alliance in Britain	Support	No

Comments:

**Animal Interfaith Alliance in Britain** would like to endorse [HB1598](#) Relating to Veterinary Medicine to be heard by the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce.

Our members join with *Hawaiian Humane*'s strong support of this Bill, which would authorise the *Hawaii Board of Veterinary Medicine* to grant temporary courtesy and relief permits for out-of-state veterinarians, permits licensed veterinarians to practise veterinarian telemedicine and allows for international veterinary school graduates to qualify for the licensure examination.

We understand that qualified out-of-state veterinarians had been allowed to practise in Hawaii for decades until a decision by the *Hawaii Veterinary Medical Board* a little over year ago. They have provided vital services including assistance with animal rescues and disaster response; high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter; relief for private-practice and shelter veterinarians; and access to specialties unavailable in the state. This bill restores that lifeline at a time when there is a nationwide shortage of veterinarians, and would include veterinarians licensed in Canada.

This measure is also supported by the *Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association* and the *Hawaii Veterinary Medical Board*.

We beg to support the motion and thank you for the opportunity to assist animals and those who care for them in the State of Hawai'i as we have done in previous years.

February 5, 2022

Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce  
Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair  
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

RE: HB 1598, Relating to Veterinary Medicine

Dear Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce,

On behalf of Veterinary Emergency + Referral Center, I am writing to express our strong support of HB 1598. The overarching intent of HB 1598 is to ensure continuous access to qualified veterinary care, with appropriate oversight from the Board of Veterinary Medicine, for all animals in Hawaii and is consistent with the mission of our organization.

Veterinary Emergency + Referral Center (VERC) is one of Hawaii's few 24-hour emergency and specialty referral veterinary facilities, offering an array of advanced diagnostic and treatment services to provide the current standard of care for small domestic animals. As a medical director at VERC, one of my responsibilities is to ensure uninterrupted availability of experienced emergency veterinarians in our hospital 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, as well as consistent coverage of our specialist services during business hours. There are a limited number of Hawaii-licensed veterinarians with the appropriate training, certification and experience to practice in facilities like ours, so we rely on out-of-state veterinarians to maintain coverage and provide a consistent level of expertise and care.

On the island of Oahu we have just 2 practicing veterinary critical care specialists, 4 small animal internists, 1 cardiologist, 1 radiologist, 1 dentist, 1 neurologist, 3 ophthalmologists and 3 surgeons. We are still lacking specialists in many disciplines, and highly trained and experienced emergency veterinarians are in short supply. This leaves Hawaii consumers and their pets constantly at risk of experiencing lapses in available emergency and specialty veterinary care if even one of these individuals needs to be away from work for any reason, whether it is for vacation, continuing education, illness, injury, maternity or personal leave. It also places an enormous burden on our veterinarians who often find it impossible to take the time they need away from work, leading to career dissatisfaction, burnout, attrition, and even greater risk of lapses in available care within our community. I have experienced this first-hand as one of the small animal internists and the wife of Hawaii's only radiologist. We have to plan vacations or other time off 6 months to a year in advance and sometimes still are unable to go. My husband read x-rays from the delivery room when our first child was born, and he wasn't able to take even a single day off following the birth of our second because there was no one to cover his workload.

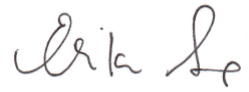
In the 10 years I have served in the role of medical director at VERC, it has often been difficult to recruit veterinarians for our vacant positions. It has been even more challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic and, unfortunately, we have experienced some lapses in ability to provide care over the past year that negatively impacted the community when we lost our surgeon, were unable to license another highly qualified, board-certified surgeon due to current licensing law, and were unable to obtain temporary permits for emergency doctors in time to keep our emergency service staffed. This year Hawaii also lost our only board-certified oncologist and there were times when owners of pets with a cancer diagnosis could not get an appointment with an oncologist due to difficulty obtaining temporary permits for out-of-state oncologists. We need to be able to more readily bring in board-certified specialists and experienced emergency veterinarians from outside the state to ensure Hawaii's pets have access to current standards of care on a consistent basis when we cannot fill a vacant position or one of our team members needs to be away from work.

Currently the process of obtaining a temporary permit or Hawaii license for veterinarians is cumbersome and not worthwhile to complete for veterinarians who intend to work here only for a couple of weeks to provide relief, and the in-person examination requirement is an additional deterrent. HB 1598 will allow us to more easily hire experienced veterinarians licensed in other states on a temporary basis, with appropriate oversight from the Board of Veterinary Medicine, to ensure Hawaii consumers have access to emergency and specialty veterinary care and avoid the critical lapses in care that occurred in 2021. It will also ensure general practice veterinarians can hire relief veterinarians to help keep their practices open and clients served during any necessary absences, allow our shelters to bring in veterinarians to support their efforts where necessary, and out-of-state veterinarians to come to our aid in the event of an emergency.

The VERC organization also supports acceptance of PAVE for foreign veterinary graduates seeking licensure in Hawaii. The Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE) is a pathway for veterinarians who are graduates of international, non-accredited veterinary programs to practice in the United States and Canada. PAVE is a rigorous program that evaluates and certifies the education equivalence of these graduates. PAVE is currently recognized by 45 states and territories in the United States, all provinces and territories in Canada, as well as the countries of Australia and New Zealand. Many foreign veterinary graduates are attracted to Hawaii's diversity and culture. Allowing those who have completed PAVE certification to become licensed veterinarians in Hawaii will ensure we are able to consider all qualified veterinarians wanting to offer their talents and expertise to our community.

Finally, VERC supports the portions of HB1598 referring to telemedicine and its regulation. We encourage amending the language of the bill as suggested by the HVMA to include the requirement of a physical examination in establishing a veterinarian-client-patient relationship as this is a crucial element to providing appropriate veterinary care and will protect Hawaii consumers.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erika Sox". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Erika" being more prominent than the last name "Sox".

**Erika Sox Burns, DVM, Diplomate ACVIM (SAIM) | Associate Medical Director**  
Veterinary Emergency and Referral Center by Ethos Veterinary Health  
345 N Nimitz Hwy. Unit C, Honolulu, HI 96817  
P: 808-735-7735 | F: 808-735-7736



**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:45:48 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Susan Rhee	The Humane Society of the United States	Support	No

Comments:

TESTIMONY SUPPORTING HB 1598

Dear Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the CPC Committee,

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States and our members and supporters across Hawaii, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to submit support of HB 1598. **The Humane Society of the United States requests that HB 1598 be reported favorably.**

HB 1598 allows for out of state veterinarians to assist, which would be tremendously helpful for groups doing mash spay and neuter clinics, as well as it also allows for telemedicine. Allowing these efforts will not only animals, but our community as a whole. Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Susan Rhee

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 1:28:08 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a longtime pet owner, aka owned by pets, I am in full support of this bill. we have a shortage of veterinarians in Hawaii. Our local vets need relief and help, especially in specialty areas. Avian vets are in short supply. They are the only ones who fully understand what is happening with birds. I had a cockatiel with fatty liver disease some years ago who was helped by my vet, who also attended a mainland conference where this was a topic and learned new treatments for my bird at a lecture.

Natural disasters add to the problem. We need to bring in vets during these times of crisis. Extra help is also needed during large scale animal rescues, which occur with too much regularity.

I am also in strong support of the telemedicine provisions of this bill. During COVID, especially in 2020 and early 2021, telemedicine was used in my medical care. There are times we do not need a physical meeting and telemedicine save time, travel, and the chance of contracting disease, especially COVID.

I urge you to move this bill forward.

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 1:49:55 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support HB1598 because it addresses the shortage of veterinarians in Hawaii.

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 2:16:18 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Taurie Kinoshita	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in strong support of HB 1598. There is a nationwide shortage of veterinarians and there are open positions across our state in both private clinics and animal shelters, putting stress on local veterinarians. Hawai'i's geographic isolation leaves it vulnerable when natural or manmade emergencies require expert boots on the ground quickly. Some veterinary specialties are missing or rare in the state. Passing this bill would help mitigate these problems. Thank you for your consideration. Mahalo, Taurie Kinoshita

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 2:29:20 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Stephanie McLaughlin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support this important bill. It will help the animals.

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 2:41:44 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lois Crozer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

At a time when there aren't enough vets in the islands, it makes sense to allow vets with foreign credentials to apply for state licenses.

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 3:22:15 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, I support this bill, as long as it truly allows for more veterinary care to Hawai'i. There are not enough veterinarians in Hawai'i. Appointments are over a month away. Many Veterinarians are not taking new clients. As an advocate for low cost / no cost spay/neuter, I especially ask that those Veterinarians coming here to provide these surgeries be most welcome, with the least amount of paperwork and restrictions. Why, because dog and cat over population is well documented. The desire by the public for no cost / low cost sterilization is most wanted, as witnessed at clinics offering those services....many times over 75 cats per day. Thank you for allowing testimony. Mahalo

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 6:14:56 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Torun Almer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass HB1598. Thank you.



**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 9:24:46 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Alice Saul	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony for HB1598 Relating to Veterinary Medicine

Please support the passage of this bill which would facilitate veterinary care that in a variety of circumstances might otherwise be lacking for pets and other resident animals. It is my understanding that the provisions in this bill allow for appropriate supervision of qualified invited practitioners and that the bill is supported by many local veterinarians as well as the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association and the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Board. It will also be welcomed by many in the community concerned with the welfare of animals, and consequently their owners.

Thank you.

Aloha

Alice Saul  
Hawaii Kai, Honolulu

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 10:25:00 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Susan Eubank	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support HB 1598.

Thank you!

Susan Eubank

Diamond Head

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 9:13:30 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Carole R. Richelieu	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I join the Hawaiian Humane Society, Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association, Hawaii Veterinary Medical Board, and animal welfare professionals in strongly supporting this bill which allows foreign licensed veterinarians temporarily or in emergencies to assist our local veterinarians and deletes hurdles for local licensure, as well as permits telemedicine where appropriate.

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 9:34:17 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chairperson Johanson, Vice Chairperson Kitagawa and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce.

I am Jennifer Chiwa and have lived on Oahu my whole life. I currently reside in Makiki.

Please support HB 1598 which will help (1) in the care of animals, (2) in access to care for pet owners and (3) veterinarians. It's my understanding that this measure will help in the current shortage locally and nationally of veterinarians, and that the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association and the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Board support this measure.

Mahalo.

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 10:12:58 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Bill Dixon	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Vote yes on HB1598.

These identical bills address a crisis-level shortage of veterinarians in Hawaii by:

Restoring the right of qualified out-of-state veterinarians to practice here.

Creating a right for veterinarians with foreign credentials to apply for Hawaii licenses.

Establishing rules for veterinary telemedicine.

The legislation was developed by the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association, Hawaiian Humane Society and other local stakeholders, and is supported by the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Board. It deserves your support.

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 12:13:39 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Julie Chen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

We need more veterinary services in the State of Hawaii. Passing HB1598 will help. I support the passing of HB1598.

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 5:04:14 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Nathaniel Lam	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Members of the House in the State Of Hawaii,

I am writing to express my fervent, and quite honestly, desperate support of House Bill 1598. A portion of this bill creates provisions for qualified out-of-state veterinarians to perform permitted relief work. The purpose of this personal testimony is to explain the great need for additional support for our patients, our professional community, and our state.

Veterinary care in Hawaii has a long and illustrious history, with many skilled veterinarians paving the way for what it is today. However, today’s veterinary graduates whom are the future of our work-force, rely heavily on specialists for advanced treatments that are now the standard of care. In the last 10 years, the number of specialists in our state has slowly increased, but not nearly enough to meet the demand. In our state, there are only a small handful of overworked Hawaii licensed board certified internal medicine doctors, surgeons, criticalists, ophthalmologists, cardiologists, oncologists, radiologists, and zoo veterinarians. Some of these are non-resident veterinarians who were only licensed in the last year to help with relief. We have one neurologist. There are no resident nutritionists, dermatologists, or radiation oncologists. We have one full-time equine/large animal veterinarian in the state of Oahu, but no board certified equine, large animal, or food animal veterinarians. We are in a crisis!

For the past 9 years I have served as the sole board certified small animal surgeon at VCA Oahu Veterinary Specialty Center, and currently one of three full-time board certified surgeons in the state of Hawaii. At many times of the year, one of us is the ONLY board certified surgeon in the state. I have been responsible for elective and emergency surgical care of dogs, cats, small mammals, and exotics that require the skill of a specialist surgeon. This includes everything from orthopedic, spinal, cardiothoracic, gastrointestinal, hepatobiliary, urogenital, reconstructive, and cancer surgery, to interventional radiology.

At our practice I average 50 appointments per week, and 15-20 surgeries per week, with a direct nursing staff that fluctuates between two and four people per shift. We work an average of 14 hours per day, 4 days a week, and are on call 24-7, 7 days a week. During the last year alone, we performed nearly 250 emergency surgeries per year, in addition to our regularly scheduled caseload. My first available consultation appointment is nearly in June, 2022. The purpose of this testimony is not toot my horn, it is a wake up call that while we have risen as a team to the needs of our community and hospital - we are sacrificing our own needs and health and we know this is not sustainable.

In the past 2 years, the need for essential veterinary health care services has grown exponentially. Our service alone, which was running at nearly maximum daily capacity in 2018, has grown by nearly 30% in the last 2 years. During this time, staffing remained the same, or worse due to COVID-19. Veterinarian and veterinary technician burn-out is at an all-time high. Our profession has a 3x higher suicide rate than average, with one of the highest, if not highest suicide rates in the United States and United Kingdom. However, if we do not work to the point of burn-out on a regular basis, patients are unable to receive timely care leading to poor outcomes, and greater emotional fatigue all around. None of us is trying to be a martyr, we are simply needed even when we are exhausted, and the alternative in many cases is the morbidity or mortality of a patient.

In addition to the daily needs of patients, our state currently does not have provision for emergency licensing of out-of-state veterinarians in the event of a natural or man-made disaster requiring a rapid response. As a state that is at high risk for inclement weather events, with limited human and material resources - this is of utmost importance.

Prior to 2018, the Board of Veterinary Medicine allowed interpretation of HRS-471 to include the legal sponsorship of qualified out-of-state veterinarians to practice on an emergency or relief basis. This allowed veterinarians, especially highly-qualified specialists of which there are few in our state, to work in place of a Hawaii-licensed veterinarian. We were able to take much needed time away from work without leaving a gap in coverage for our state. However, since November 2018, the statute was reinterpreted by the Board of Veterinary Medicine and the sponsorship program was terminated.

A permitted interaction group was formed and the bill you have before you was created with the wisdom, desperation, and support of Hawaii's own veterinarians. The visiting veterinarian and telemedicine portions of the bill will specifically improve our ability to provide timely quality care to so many animals who need us. It will also enable us to help ourselves, as we are struggling too. I myself, joined the Board of Veterinary Medicine specifically to help be a part of a solution to provide continuous comprehensive care to the animals of Hawaii and their human companions. I am fully supportive of the Bill's intent to provide regulated and accountable help for the veterinarians in the state of Hawaii, and I hope that this personal testimony serves as an eye opener.

With warm aloha,  
Nathaniel Lam, DVM, DACVS (SA)  
Chief of Surgery  
VCA Oahu Veterinary Specialty Center



**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:30:05 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Carolyn Naun	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am a practicing veterinarian who has lived and worked in Hawaii since 2010 and am writing to SUPPORT HB1598. Increasingly, pet owners regard their animal companions as full fledged family members. Happily, in the past ten years, availability of quality veterinary care in the islands has improved immensely and our clients now rightly expect timely access to high level care including specialty and emergency services. HB1598 will help reduce bottlenecks and red tape that currently cause significant delays for veterinary healthcare providers seeking to gain temporary or permanent licensure in the state. This bill benefits our profession as well as Hawaii's animals and their human caregivers.

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:56:42 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Nandita Sharma	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB 1598. I can speak from experience that it is urgent that people in Hawaii have access to veterinarians from out of state. One of my cats required urgent and extensive veterinary care for skin cancer. The only veterinarian available to do the surgery quickly was from out of state. Without her, our cat would have suffered greatly or even passed away.

The fact is that Hawaii does not have enough veterinarians to service people with pets in Hawaii. Just as we rely on out-of-state health providers to service health care for humans, we need to allow veterinarians to come in to provide this vital service.

I strongly encourage you to support this Bill.

Sincerely,

Nandita Sharma, Ph.D.

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 12:11:45 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Eric Ako DVM	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Honorable Chair Rep Johanson,Rep Hashem,Rep Aquino,Rep Har,and other committee members,

i fully support HB1598,an essential improvement in the language governing veterinary medicine in Hawaii.

As with our human physicians,we are experiencing a shortage of veterinarians (as well as veterinary technicians,assistants and other staff) on a State and national level.Furthermore,practice has become much more stressful due to client demands,on all islands.

Please help us update our laws.

With all due respect,

Eric Ako DVM

Past Chair,Board of Veterinary Medicine,State of Hawaii

Past President,Executive Vice President,Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association

Board member,Hawaiian Humane Society

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 12:41:18 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Aleisha Swartz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

This bill is needed to ensure the ability of animals to access the veterinary care they need in Hawaii. Without these changes, there is a risk of animals suffering and being denied veterinary care due to the limited number of licensed veterinarians residing in the state. This can be done safely, with supervision as in many other states. We need to reduce barriers to obtaining veterinary licensure in Hawaii, not increase them for qualified individuals. This is especially important as a shortage of veterinarians is predicted for the future.

Telemedicine is essential as well to ensure access to care. One important example is that both Lanai and Molokai currently have no veterinarians on island and having the ability to provide telemedicine as an option for clients and patients will reduce animal suffering and improve human and animal well-being.

Mahalo,

Aleisha Swartz, DVM

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1598

**LATE**

Aloha Chair Representative Johanson, Vice Chair Representative Kitagawa and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

HB1598 is a vitally important bill for Hawaii's animals, pet owners and veterinarians and I urge you to give it your full support.

Qualified out-of-state veterinarians had been allowed to practice in Hawaii until recently. A number of stakeholders, from the veterinary community to animal welfare groups, worked together to draft this bill and restore that important lifeline.

There is a nationwide shortage of veterinarians and there are open positions across our state in both private clinics and animal shelters, putting stress on local veterinarians.

Both private clinics and animal welfare nonprofits rely on qualified out-of-state veterinarians for relief support and the provision of expertise that is rare or completely unavailable in the state, such as dermatology, oncology and forensic veterinary medicine.

Please pass HB1598 and allow veterinarians licensed in good standing in other states or Canada to work in Hawaii at the invitation of our local veterinarians.

Mahalo for your consideration.  
Sheri Iha

Support for HB1598 Relating to Veterinary Medicine  
Tuesday, February 8, 2022  
2:00 p.m.

**LATE**

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Dear Honorable Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the committee,

Please pass HB1598 to help local veterinarians and pet owners.

Local veterinary clinics are overwhelmed. Even regular appointments are challenging to get and it can take months to see a specialist. Our veterinarians are doing their best, but there simply aren't enough of them and this bill would allow them more flexibility in terms of getting help for their clients.

This bill is a reasonable approach that will allow qualified out-of-state veterinarians to help local veterinarians and their clients. Its provisions protect animals and consumers and it has my strong support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on HB1598.

Miyako Sugakawa

To: Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair  
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

**LATE**

DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022  
TIME: 2:00 p.m.  
PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
Conference Room 329  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Pass HB1598 Veterinary Medicine

Aloha Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members,

I want to share my strong support for HB1598 Relating to Veterinary Medicine.

Hawaii's geographic isolation leaves it vulnerable when natural or manmade emergencies require expert boots on the ground quickly. This critical bill will allow qualified out-of-state veterinarians to be invited to the state immediately to assist our local veterinarians in the case of natural disasters or animal rescues. This is a win for our local animals.

Mainland veterinarians also have played an important role in spay/neuter in Hawaii. In years past they have participated in high-volume traveling clinics throughout the state that help sterilize Free-Roaming cats and the pets of owners who otherwise lack access to affordable veterinary care. This bill would allow those activities to resume.

I urge the committee to pass HB1598.

Mahalo!

Serena Stefanic-Phillip

Support for HB1598 Relating to Veterinary Medicine

**LATE**

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

2:00 p.m.

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Dear Honorable Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the committee,

Please pass HB1598 to help local veterinarians and pet owners.

Local veterinary clinics are overwhelmed. Even regular appointments are challenging to get and it can take months to see a specialist. Our veterinarians are doing their best, but there simply aren't enough of them and this bill would allow them more flexibility in terms of getting help for their clients.

This bill is a reasonable approach that will allow qualified out-of-state veterinarians to help local veterinarians and their clients. Its provisions protect animals and consumers and it has my strong support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on HB1598.

Sincerely,

Ashley Wilcox



To: Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair  
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

**LATE**

DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022  
TIME: 2:00 p.m.  
PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
Conference Room 329  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members,

I want to share my strong support for HB1598 Relating to Veterinary Medicine.

Hawaii's geographic isolation leaves it vulnerable when natural or manmade emergencies require expert boots on the ground quickly. This critical bill will allow qualified out-of-state veterinarians to be invited to the state immediately to assist our local veterinarians in the case of natural disasters or animal rescues. This is a win for our local animals.

Mainland veterinarians also have played an important role in spay/neuter in Hawaii. In years past they have participated in high-volume traveling clinics throughout the state that help sterilize Free-Roaming cats and the pets of owners who otherwise lack access to affordable veterinary care. This bill would allow those activities to resume.

I urge the committee to pass HB1598. Mahalo!

Sincerely,  
Hamid Jahanmir

Please Pass HB1598 Veterinary Medicine

**LATE**

To: Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair  
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022  
TIME: 2:00 p.m.  
PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
Conference Room 329  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members,

**I am in support of HB1598. This provides additional services to our animal friends. The need is there let's provide the resources.**

Hawaii's geographic isolation leaves it vulnerable when natural or manmade emergencies require expert boots on the ground quickly. This critical bill will allow qualified out-of-state veterinarians to be invited to the state immediately to assist our local veterinarians in the case of natural disasters or animal rescues. This is a win for our local animals.

Mainland veterinarians also have played an important role in spay/neuter in Hawaii. In years past they have participated in high-volume traveling clinics throughout the state that help sterilize Free-Roaming cats and the pets of owners who otherwise lack access to affordable veterinary care. This bill would allow those activities to resume.

Mahalo!  
Wayne Niide

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1598

**LATE**

Aloha Chair Representative Johanson, Vice Chair Representative Kitagawa and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

HB1598 is a vitally important bill for Hawaii's animals, pet owners and veterinarians and I urge you to give it your full support.

**I support HB1598 for the following reasons**

- 1. Provides vital and timely access to health care for animals who are rescued, abused, and affected by events/disasters not only on Oahu but on our other islands where vet access is severely limited.**
- 2. Gives much needed reprieve to licensed practicing Hawaii Vets, when there is already a shortage of Vets in Hawaii**

**For the welfare of our Animals in the State of Hawaii and to be proactive by initiating actions that address the ongoing shortage of Veterinary doctors in our state, I ask you to support this bill.**

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Melanie Kim

Sunday, February 6, 2022

**LATE**

Please Pass HB1598 Veterinary Medicine

To: Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair  
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 329

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members,

**I strongly support this bill due to the current shortage of qualified Veterinarians in Hawaii. This bill would allow out of state veterinarians the opportunity to work in Hawaii. With availability of more veterinarians coming to neighbor islands, the animals will get the medical help they need and programs such as Trap Neuter Release will be a great success. Your support of this bill will help the animals tremendously.**

**Mahalo for reading my testimony.**

Sincerely,  
Helene Navaro

Please Pass HB1598 Veterinary Medicine

**LATE**

To: Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Rep. Aaron Ling Johanson, Chair  
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022  
TIME: 2:00 p.m.  
PLACE: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
Conference Room 329  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members,

**I am an elementary school student from Honolulu and I support HB1598.**

**There is a shortage of veterinarians and that is putting stress on local veterinarians. There are a lot of open veterinarian positions in the state of Hawaii.**

**This bill will help animals get emergency treatment by letting veterinarians come in quickly.**

**I care about this issue because I have a cat.**

I urge the committee to pass HB1598.

Sincerely,

Luke Nagasako

Support for HB1598 Relating to Veterinary Medicine

**LATE**

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

2:00 p.m.

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Dear Honorable Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the committee,

Please pass HB1598 to help local veterinarians and pet owners.

Local veterinary clinics are overwhelmed. Even regular appointments are challenging to get and it can take months to see a specialist. Our veterinarians are doing their best, but there simply aren't enough of them and this bill would allow them more flexibility in terms of getting help for their clients.

This bill is a reasonable approach that will allow qualified out-of-state veterinarians to help local veterinarians and their clients. Its provisions protect animals and consumers and it has my strong support.

**We need these options for animal care because local vets can be overwhelmed.  
Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on HB1598.**

Sincerely,

Martha Randolph

**LATE**

Monday, February 7, 2022

Aloha Chair Representative Johanson, Vice Chair Representative Kitagawa and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

HB1598 is a vitally important bill for Hawaii's animals, pet owners and veterinarians and I urge you to give it your full support.

Qualified out-of-state veterinarians had been allowed to practice in Hawaii until recently. A number of stakeholders, from the veterinary community to animal welfare groups, worked together to draft this bill and restore that important lifeline.

There is a nationwide shortage of veterinarians and there are open positions across our state in both private clinics and animal shelters, putting stress on local veterinarians.

Both private clinics and animal welfare nonprofits rely on qualified out-of-state veterinarians for relief support and the provision of expertise that is rare or completely unavailable in the state, such as dermatology, oncology and forensic veterinary medicine.

Please pass HB1598 and allow veterinarians licensed in good standing in other states or Canada to work in Hawaii at the invitation of our local veterinarians.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Torun Almer

Yes in Support of House Bill 1598

**LATE**

Aloha Chair Representative Johanson, Vice Chair Representative Kitagawa and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

HB1598 is a vitally important bill for Hawaii's animals, pet owners and veterinarians and I urge you to give it your full support.

Qualified out-of-state veterinarians had been allowed to practice in Hawaii until recently. A number of stakeholders, from the veterinary community to animal welfare groups, worked together to draft this bill and restore that important lifeline.

There is a nationwide shortage of veterinarians and there are open positions across our state in both private clinics and animal shelters, putting stress on local veterinarians.

Both private clinics and animal welfare nonprofits rely on qualified out-of-state veterinarians for relief support and the provision of expertise that is rare or completely unavailable in the state, such as dermatology, oncology and forensic veterinary medicine.

**Amazing things can be accomplished with the help of more doctors! Please pass this bill.**

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Linda Groves



**LATE**

Aloha Chair Representative Johanson, Vice Chair Representative Kitagawa and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

HB1598 is a vitally important bill for Hawaii's animals, pet owners and veterinarians and I urge you to give it your full support.

Qualified out-of-state veterinarians had been allowed to practice in Hawaii until recently. A number of stakeholders, from the veterinary community to animal welfare groups, worked together to draft this bill and restore that important lifeline.

There is a nationwide shortage of veterinarians and there are open positions across our state in both private clinics and animal shelters, putting stress on local veterinarians.

Both private clinics and animal welfare nonprofits rely on qualified out-of-state veterinarians for relief support and the provision of expertise that is rare or completely unavailable in the state, such as dermatology, oncology and forensic veterinary medicine.

Please pass HB1598 and allow veterinarians licensed in good standing in other states or Canada to work in Hawaii at the invitation of our local veterinarians.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Jessica Tronoski

Support for HB1598 Relating to Veterinary Medicine

**LATE**

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

2:00 p.m.

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Dear Honorable Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the committee,

Please pass HB1598 to help local veterinarians and pet owners.

THERE ARE ALREADY UNLICENSED PEOPLE PROVIDING VET SERVICES IN HAWAII. Local veterinary clinics are overwhelmed. Even regular appointments are challenging to get and it can take months to see a specialist. Our veterinarians are doing their best, but there simply aren't enough of them and this bill would allow them more flexibility in terms of getting help for their clients.

This bill is a reasonable approach that will allow qualified out-of-state veterinarians to help local veterinarians and their clients. Its provisions protect animals and consumers and it has my strong support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on HB1598.

Sincerely,

Jenee Odani

Support for HB1598 Relating to Veterinary Medicine

**LATE**

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

2:00 p.m.

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Dear Honorable Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the committee,

Please pass HB1598 to help local veterinarians and pet owners.

Local veterinary clinics are overwhelmed. Even regular appointments are challenging to get and it can take months to see a specialist. Our veterinarians are doing their best, but there simply aren't enough of them and this bill would allow them more flexibility in terms of getting help for their clients.

This bill is a reasonable approach that will allow qualified out-of-state veterinarians to help local veterinarians and their clients. Its provisions protect animals and consumers and it has my strong support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on HB1598.

Sincerely,

Alberta Joy Freidus-Flagg

Tuesday, February 8, 2022  
2:00 p.m.  
Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

**LATE**

Dear Honorable Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the committee,

Please pass HB1598 to help local veterinarians and pet owners.

Local veterinary clinics are overwhelmed. Even regular appointments are challenging to get and it can take months to see a specialist. Our veterinarians are doing their best, but there simply aren't enough of them and this bill would allow them more flexibility in terms of getting help for their clients.

This bill is a reasonable approach that will allow qualified out-of-state veterinarians to help local veterinarians and their clients. Its provisions protect animals and consumers and it has my strong support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on HB1598.

Natalie Graham-Wood

**LATE**

**HB-1598**

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 12:22:28 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/8/2022 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Selene Mersereau	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This bill would be beneficial for Hawaii's animal welfare. Thank you. Selene