

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**FEBRUARY 7, 2022
1:00 P.M.
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2798
RELATING TO VETERINARY MEDICINE**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 2798 relating to the Veterinary Medicine. Senate Bill 2798 amends Chapter 471, Hawaii Revised Statutes to authorize the Hawaii board of veterinary medicine to grant temporary courtesy and relief permits for out-of-state veterinarians. SB2798 also details how licensed veterinarians may practice veterinarian telemedicine and for international veterinary school graduates to qualify for Hawaii licensure examination.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Testimony of the Hawaii Board of Veterinary Medicine

**Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, February 7, 2022
1:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 2798, RELATING TO VETERINARY MEDICINE**

Chair Gabbard 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.



Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

2700 Waialae Avenue Honolulu, Hawaii 96826
808.356.2200 • HawaiianHumane.org

Date: Feb. 4, 2022

To: Chair Sen. Mike Gabbard
Vice Chair Sen. Clarence Nishihara
and Members of the
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

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

RE: Testimony in strong support of SB 2798: Relating to Veterinary Medicine
Monday, Feb. 7, 2022, 2 p.m., Via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our enthusiastic support for Senate Bill 2798, 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 SB 2798. Mahalo for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.



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

February 4, 2022

Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

RE: SB 2798, Relating to Veterinary Medicine

Dear Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

On behalf of the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association (HVMA), I would like to express our strong support of SB 2798 and its strengthening of Hawaii's veterinary practice laws.

SB 2798 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 brought about 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 SB 2798 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.

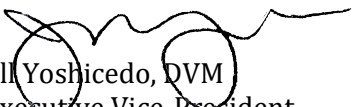
4. For accuracy in identifying the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Council on Education which has decisional independence from the AVMA on veterinary school standards, please include the full agency name as follows:

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 SB 2798 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

February 5, 2022

Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

RE: SB 2798, Relating to Veterinary Medicine

Dear Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

On behalf of Veterinary Emergency + Referral Center, I am writing to express our strong support of SB 2798. The overarching intent of SB 2798 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.

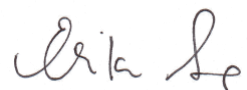
In the 10 years I have served in the role of medical director at VERC, it has often been difficult to recruit veterinarians for our vacant positions. It has been even more challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic and, unfortunately, we have experienced some lapses in ability to provide care over the 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 rely on 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. SB 2798 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 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 SB2798 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,



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

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 11:28:08 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Comments	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

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 4:46:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Barbara Barry	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB 2798,

Mahalo,

Barbara Barry

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 1:48:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB 2798 because it addresses the shortage of veterinarians in Hawaii at this time.

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 2:15:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
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.

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 2:18:45 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Taurie Kinoshita	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of SB2798.

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 issues immensely.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, Taurie Kinoshita

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 2:29:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Stephanie McLaughlin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support this important bill. It will help animals.

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 2:40:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Lois Crozer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

There is a shortage of vets here and so I approve vets with foreign credentials to apply for state licenses.

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 6:17:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Torun Almer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass SB2798. Thank you.

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/4/2022 9:04:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Alice Saul	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

With reference to SB2798.

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

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 12:28:47 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Animal Interfaith Alliance in Britain would like to endorse [SB2798](#) Relating to Veterinary Medicine to be heard by the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment.

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.

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 10:23:12 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Susan Eubank	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2798.

Mahalo!

Susan Eubank

Diamond Head

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 5:58:49 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Wayne Niide	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of SB2798 to provide our additional qualified services to address the needs our animal friends. Passage of this Bill will satisfy satisfy this need.

Let's be human(e) and support this Bill!

Thank you!

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 9:11:00 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
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.

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 9:19:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment.

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

Please support SB 2798 which will help (1) in care of animals, (2) in access to care for pet owners and (3) veterinarians. It's my understanding that there is a nationwide and local shortage of veterinarians, and that the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association and Hawaii Veterinary Medical Board support this measure.

Mahalo.

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 9:33:24 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Anne Forshey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB2798 Relating to Veterinary Medicine - Testimony in Support of the Bill

Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment (AGR)

To be heard on **Friday, Feb. 7, at 1 p.m.**

Anne Forshey/annejforshey@gmail.com/410-294-0987

Sen. Mike Gabbard, Chair

Sen. Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

As a (rescue) pet owner and animal lover, I firmly support this effort to bring Hawaii's veterinary services and procedures into the 21st century. Clearly, the authors and supporters of this bill understand Hawaii's needs, the value of cooperation with professionals across the country, and the enhanced health benefits associated with telemedicine.

It is clear that our local professionals with both the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association and the Hawaii Veterinary Medical Board are promoting best practices in crafting and supporting this important piece of legislation.

Having volunteered with the Hawaiian Humane Society during their massive Waianae rescue effort, 2016/17, I fully appreciate the importance and value of providing timely vital medical services to rescued animals. This bill will allow us to ramp-up our care-givers and assistance during animal rescue efforts or natural disasters.

I believe this important piece of legislation will promote greater protection and care for our animals and provide greater access to care for pet owners while supporting our hardworking local veterinarians. I urge you to favorably consider this forward-looking legislation.

Support for SB2798 Relating to Veterinary Medicine

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

Monday, February 7, 2022

1:00 PM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

I want to share my strong support for SB2798 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 SB2798. Mahalo!

Sincerely,

Martha Randolph

Please Pass Senate Bill 2798

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara and committee members:

Please pass SB2798 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.

Sincerely,
Sheri Iha

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

Monday, February 7, 2022

1:00 PM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Support for SB2798 Relating to Veterinary Medicine

I want to share my strong support for SB2798 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 SB2798.

Mahalo!

June Sugakawa

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair
Monday, February 7, 2022
1:00 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

I want to share my strong support for SB2798 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 SB2798.

Mahalo,
Serena Stefanic-Phillip

Please Pass Senate Bill 2798

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara and committee members:

Please pass SB2798 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.

Sincerely,
Susan Collins

Please Pass Senate Bill 2798

Monday, February 7, 2022

1:00 PM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara and committee members:

Please pass SB2798 to help local veterinarians and pet owners. **My dog has been in need of a dermatology specialist for many years. There isn't one on the island.**

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.

Laura Myers

DATE: Monday, February 7, 2022

TIME: 1:00 PM

PLACE: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair Clarence Nishihara and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

Please pass Senate Bill 2798. SB2798 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 SB2798 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.

Sincerely,

Natalie Spencer

Please Pass Senate Bill 2798

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair
Monday, February 7, 2022
1:00 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara and committee members:

We have a nationwide shortage of veterinarians and this bill would allow qualified veterinarians opportunities to work in Hawaii and in turn helping the animals of Hawaii especially with Trap Neuter Release programs. This bill will help neighbor islands shortage of veterinary too especially with farm animals. I am strongly supporting this bill.

Please pass SB2798 to help local veterinarians and pet owners.
Thank you for reading my testimony.

Mahalo,

Helene Navaro

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 10:17:06 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Bill Dixon	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Vote yes on SB 2798 / HB 1598.

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.

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 12:16:33 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Julie Chen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

We need more veterinary services in the State of Hawaii. Passing SB2798 will help. I support the passing of SB2798.

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 5:02:11 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nathaniel Lam	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Members of the Senate in the State Of Hawaii,

I am writing to express my fervent, and quite honestly, desperate support of Senate Bill 2798. 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

SB-2798

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:28:56 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/7/2022 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
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 SB2798. 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. SB2798 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.

TESTIMONY SUPPORTING SB 2798

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara and members of the AEN 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 SB 2798. The Humane Society of the United States requests that SB 2798 be reported favorably.

SB 2798 allows for out of state veterinarians to assist, which would be tremendously helpful for groups doing mass 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