

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 43  
2 AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
3 (Proposed by the House Committee on Appropriations  
4 on February 7, 2024)  
5 (Patron Prior to Substitute--Delegate Lopez)

6 Requesting the Board of Veterinary Medicine, in consultation with the State Veterinarian, to study the  
7 shortage of large animal veterinarians. Report.

8 WHEREAS, as of 2023, the shortage of rural veterinarians has reached an all-time high as 500  
9 counties in 46 states have been deemed to have a critical shortage of large animal veterinarians; and

10 WHEREAS, only three to four percent of new veterinary graduates have entered food animal-  
11 related practice over the past 20 years; and

12 WHEREAS, by providing preventative care, disease treatment, and strategies for herd health and  
13 productivity, large animal veterinarians are a critical resource for farmers; large animal veterinarians can  
14 help prevent large-scale loss of herds or flocks when a highly transmissible disease sweeps through an  
15 area; and

16 WHEREAS, if the current downward trend in large animal veterinarians continues, there will be  
17 cause for concern for a safe food supply, the potential for widespread animal disease outbreaks, and a  
18 decline in the economic vitality of rural communities; and

19 WHEREAS, while the State Veterinarian designates areas of the Commonwealth that have a  
20 shortage of large animal veterinarians so students from such areas can apply for partial federal loan  
21 forgiveness programs, the current program fails to attract students in such areas of most need; now,  
22 therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Board of Veterinary  
24 Medicine, in consultation with the State Veterinarian, be requested to study the shortage of large animal  
25 veterinarians.

26 In conducting the study, the Board of Veterinary Medicine and the State Veterinarian shall (i)  
27 identify ways to strengthen existing debt repayment programs for veterinarians, including making  
28 recommendations on how to simplify application criteria, exploring state matching loan repayment  
29 programs, limiting barriers for participation, and improving methods for consistent identification of  
30 veterinary shortage areas to better target rural communities in need; (ii) examine options for developing  
31 programs that offer business support to provide incentives or low-interest business loans for large animal  
32 private practices; (iii) identify programs that support a strong pipeline of veterinary students from rural  
33 backgrounds and help such students navigate post-secondary education to increase retention; (iv) examine  
34 other possible solutions for increasing the number of large animal veterinarians in the Commonwealth,  
35 such as expanding veterinary technician-type or physician assistant-type programs to allow large animal  
36 veterinarians to expand their scope of practice in rural areas; and (v) reexamine the recommendations from  
37 the 2010 study on the shortage of large animal veterinarians published pursuant to House Joint Resolution  
38 730 (2009).

39 Technical assistance shall be provided to the Board of Veterinary Medicine and the State  
40 Veterinarian by the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Polytechnic Institute  
41 and State University, the Lincoln Memorial University College of Veterinary Medicine, the Virginia Farm  
42 Bureau Federation, the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, the Virginia Academy of Food Animal  
43 Practitioners, the Virginia Agribusiness Council, the Virginia Department of Business Assistance,  
44 Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and the Virginia  
45 Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission and a member of the House of Delegates appointed by the  
46 Speaker of the House of Delegates and a member of the Senate of Virginia appointed by the Senate  
47 Committee on Rules. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Board of  
48 Veterinary Medicine for this study, upon request.

49 Upon completion of the study, the Board of Veterinary Medicine shall submit its report to the  
50 House Committees on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and on Education, and the Senate  
51 Committees on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and on Education and Health, and these

