



New York Farm Bureau
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MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Senate Bill 4589 (Senator Ritchie) / Assembly Bill 7429 (Assemblyman Magee)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC HEALTH LAW, IN RELATION TO CREATING THE VETERINARIANS ACROSS RURAL NEW YORK STATE STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT FUND

Date: 5/22/2017

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm advocacy organization, requests your support for this important legislation. If enacted, this bill would establish the Veterinarians Across Rural New York State Student Loan Repayment Fund.

Large animal veterinarians, such as those who care for dairy cattle, beef cattle, swine, poultry, horses, etc., play an integral role in the New York agriculture industry. Unfortunately, when veterinary students graduate from school, they often have over \$100,000 in student loans. With having to repay these high student loans, young veterinarians will seek corporate practices in metropolitan areas. This leaves rural communities with less veterinarian professionals to provide health care for large animals that are vital to the nation's food supply and the New York economy.

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recently identified high priority veterinarian shortage areas in New York and they include Delaware, Sullivan, and St. Lawrence counties. This points to a critical need for veterinarians in rural parts of New York State. This legislation could help alleviate the veterinarian shortage for farmers across the state as well as in these high need areas.

These rural areas also need to attract veterinarians with expertise in fields such as biosecurity, nutrition, preventive medicine, and other specialty fields. Creating the student loan repayment fund will attract and retain veterinarians to work within rural communities. For these reasons, New York Farm Bureau respectfully requests your support of this legislation.