

U.S. Rep. Kind: Introduces bill to address veterinarian shortage across rural Wisconsin

Posted on Thursday, May 16, 2019

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact: Aaron White

Phone: 202-225-5506

Aaron.White@mail.house.gov

WASHINGTON - Today, **U.S. Rep. Ron Kind** introduced the bipartisan the *Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act*, which would address the veterinarian shortage across Wisconsin by eliminating burdensome taxes on programs that encourage veterinarians to practice in rural communities. The bill was co-sponsored by Rep. Adrian Smith (R-NE). Companion legislation was introduced in Senate by Sens. Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI).

“Veterinarians are an important part of a healthy rural and farm economy, but many regions throughout our state are facing a shortage of animal care professionals. This bill will help attract veterinarians to communities in need across western and central Wisconsin, and ensure a healthy and safe food supply,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**.

The bill is supported by the Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association (WVMA):

“The Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association (WVMA) is extremely grateful to Congressman Kind for leading the reintroduction of the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) Enhancement Act. Expanding the program through passage of the VMLRP Enhancement Act is more important now than ever, as food animal veterinarians are aging out of the workforce and struggling to recruit associates to take on over their businesses,” said **Kim Brown Pokorny, MS, MBA,**

Executive Director, Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association.

The United States Department of Agriculture has designated five underserved zones in Wisconsin, including one zone in Wisconsin's Third Congressional District which spans Eau Claire, Jackson and Trempealeau counties. In this shortage zone, there are approximately 36,000 cows and only 12 food animal or mixed animal veterinarians.

The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) is subject to a burdensome 37 percent federal withholding tax, limiting the number of awards for young veterinarians attempting to utilize the program. The *Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act* will provide an exemption from the federal income withholding tax for veterinarians and bring more veterinaries to rural communities across the country.