

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Agriculture & Livestock
For HB 4069

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Hearing Date: April 5, 2023 8:00 AM

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As a Texan who suffered avoidable economic harm due to lack of truly informed consent where my beloved dog was concerned, I strongly support HB 4069. I thank Rep. Meyer for authoring the bill and the Committee for hearing it.

Currently, Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (TBVME) statute and rule expressly exclude financial aspects of veterinary care. In fact, the complaint page of the TBVME's website says, "Recovery of damages to you is beyond the scope of the Board's authority." And, if HB 3049/SB 1523 passes this session, cost complaints will be summarily dismissed.

TBVME statute and rule also generally exclude informed consent. A rule change was recently proposed that would have incorporated informed consent into TBVME's honesty, integrity, and fair dealing rule, but the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) so vehemently opposed the change that the TBVME withdrew it.

Pet spending in the US surpassed \$100 billion for the first time in 2020 and approached \$137 billion in 2022, far exceeding inflation. We Texans love our pets. A recent study ranked Texas the #1 best state for pets when considering various lifestyle factors including the average amount spent on pets. Yet, we astonishingly lack consumer protections.

HB 4069 is an important step forward. This bill will help mitigate risks of crippling economic burden to Texans who may unwittingly submit their animal family members to high-cost care during times of distress—sometimes without evidence of benefits and with considerable risk of harms. (I forked out tens of thousands of dollars for my dog's care, not knowing he was doomed from nearly the start.)

Transparency is key. For Texans to make informed decisions, we must consistently be given germane information about veterinary care, including costs. Even the American Veterinary Medical Association agrees that "It is the attending veterinarian's responsibility to inform the client of the expected results and costs, and the related risks of each treatment regimen."

This bill is a good one that will help not only consumers but also veterinary professionals. Consumers need information to make the best decisions for animal family members, and veterinary professionals will be better protected by providing informed consent, so it's a win-win.

I appreciate Rep. Meyer caring enough about pet-loving Texans to put forth this bill. You may hear my applause from Houston.

With gratitude and kindest regards,
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