

By: Tepper

H.B. No. 2992

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the name and function of the rural veterinarian  
incentive program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. The heading to Subchapter G, Chapter 56,  
Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER G. RURAL AND SHELTER VETERINARIAN INCENTIVE PROGRAM

SECTION 2. Section 56.101, Education Code, is amended to  
read as follows:

Sec. 56.101. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Account" means the rural and shelter veterinarian  
incentive program account.

(2) "College" means a college of veterinary medicine  
located in this state and accredited by the American Veterinary  
Medical Association Council on Education.

(3) "Committee" means the rural and shelter  
veterinarian incentive program committee.

(4) "Eligible participant" means a person eligible to  
participate in the program under Section 56.104.

(5) "General academic teaching institution" has the  
meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(6) "High-quality, high-volume spay and neuter  
clinic" means an animal shelter or a veterinary clinic that:

(A) spays or neuters, on average, at least 40

1 dogs per business day; and

2 (B) charges a below-market fee for a spay or  
3 neuter procedure.

4 (7) "Program" means the rural and shelter veterinarian  
5 incentive program established by this subchapter.

6 (8) [~~(7)~~] "Rural county" means a county in this state  
7 with a population of less than 150,000.

8 (9) "Shelter medicine" includes all areas of  
9 veterinary practice relevant to the care and management of stray,  
10 homeless, abandoned, or unwanted animals.

11 (10) [~~(8)~~] "University system" has the meaning  
12 assigned by Section 61.003.

13 SECTION 3. The heading to Section 56.103, Education Code,  
14 is amended to read as follows:

15 Sec. 56.103. RURAL AND SHELTER VETERINARIAN INCENTIVE  
16 PROGRAM COMMITTEE; RULES.

17 SECTION 4. Section 56.103, Education Code, is amended by  
18 amending Subsections (a) and (d) and adding Subsection (f) to read  
19 as follows:

20 (a) The rural and shelter veterinarian incentive program  
21 committee consists of:

22 (1) the executive director of the Texas Animal Health  
23 Commission, or the executive director's designee;

24 (2) the executive director of the State Board of  
25 Veterinary Medical Examiners, or the executive director's  
26 designee;

27 (3) the dean of each accredited college of veterinary

1 medicine located in this state, or the dean's designee;

2 (4) a veterinarian with a mixed animal practice,  
3 representing each university system located in Texas with an  
4 accredited college of veterinary medicine, appointed by the board  
5 of regents of each university system;

6 (5) a veterinarian with a large animal practice,  
7 representing each university system located in Texas with an  
8 accredited college of veterinary medicine, appointed by the board  
9 of regents of each university system; ~~and~~

10 (6) a practitioner of veterinary medicine who serves  
11 as a commissioner of the Texas Animal Health Commission, appointed  
12 by the chair of the Texas Animal Health Commission; and

13 (7) two shelter medicine practitioners who are  
14 associated with an animal shelter, appointed by the president of  
15 the State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.

16 (d) The committee shall adopt rules:

17 (1) establishing criteria to determine whether a  
18 person is an eligible participant as the committee considers  
19 reasonable, including the person's:

20 (A) background and interest in rural practice or  
21 shelter medicine; and

22 (B) financial need;

23 (2) providing for requesting the distribution of money  
24 from the account for the program;

25 (3) establishing the criteria necessary [~~for a~~  
26 ~~community or political subdivision in a rural county~~] to qualify as  
27 a student sponsor under Section 56.105;

1 (4) governing agreements of financial support between  
2 a [~~rural~~] sponsor and an eligible student; and

3 (5) establishing other procedures necessary to  
4 administer the program.

5 (f) In adopting rules under this section, the committee:

6 (1) is not required to disburse money under the  
7 program evenly among all eligible participants; and

8 (2) shall ensure that financial assistance provided  
9 under the program provides the maximum benefit to communities by  
10 filling areas of need in large-animal, mixed-animal, or shelter  
11 medicine practice.

12 SECTION 5. The heading to Section 56.105, Education Code,  
13 is amended to read as follows:

14 Sec. 56.105. [~~RURAL~~] SPONSORS; AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE  
15 FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

16 SECTION 6. Sections 56.105(a) and (b), Education Code, are  
17 amended to read as follows:

18 (a) A community or political subdivision located in a rural  
19 county or any community or political subdivision within which a  
20 high-quality, high-volume spay and neuter clinic is located that  
21 qualifies under the rules of the committee may become a sponsor of  
22 an eligible participant and may provide financial support to the  
23 eligible participant under the program.

24 (b) To participate as a sponsor in the program, the  
25 community or political subdivision must enter into an agreement  
26 with the eligible participant to provide financial support to the  
27 eligible participant in an amount not less than the tuition and fees

1 required for a full academic year for a student enrolled in a  
2 college in exchange for the eligible participant's agreement to  
3 practice veterinary medicine;

4 (1) in a rural county, anywhere in the sponsoring  
5 community or political subdivision; or

6 (2) in a high-quality, high-volume spay and neuter  
7 clinic located in the sponsoring community or political  
8 subdivision.

9 SECTION 7. The heading to Section 56.106, Education Code,  
10 is amended to read as follows:

11 Sec. 56.106. FINANCIAL SUPPORT; COMMITMENT TO PRACTICE IN  
12 RURAL COUNTY OR HIGH-QUALITY, HIGH-VOLUME SPAY AND NEUTER CLINIC.

13 SECTION 8. Section 56.106(a), Education Code, is amended to  
14 read as follows:

15 (a) To participate in the program, an eligible participant  
16 must enter into an agreement with the Texas Higher Education  
17 Coordinating Board that:

18 (1) requires the participant to practice veterinary  
19 medicine in a rural county or in a high-quality, high-volume spay  
20 and neuter clinic for one calendar year for each academic year for  
21 which the participant receives financial support under the program;

22 (2) specifies the conditions the participant must  
23 satisfy to receive financial support under the program;

24 (3) provides that any financial support the  
25 participant receives under the program constitutes a loan until the  
26 participant satisfies the conditions of the agreement; and

27 (4) requires the participant to sign a promissory note

1 acknowledging the conditional nature of the financial support  
2 received under the program and promising to repay the amount of the  
3 financial support, any applicable interest, and reasonable  
4 collection costs if the participant does not satisfy the conditions  
5 of the agreement.

6 SECTION 9. The heading to Section 61.9965, Education Code,  
7 is amended to read as follows:

8 Sec. 61.9965. RURAL AND SHELTER VETERINARIAN INCENTIVE  
9 PROGRAM ACCOUNT.

10 SECTION 10. Sections 61.9965(a) and (b), Education Code,  
11 are amended to read as follows:

12 (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall  
13 administer the rural and shelter veterinarian incentive program  
14 account in accordance with Subchapter G, Chapter 56, to provide  
15 assistance in the repayment of student loans for eligible  
16 veterinarians who apply and qualify for the assistance under the  
17 rules of the Texas Animal Health Commission rural and shelter  
18 veterinarian incentive program committee.

19 (b) The rural and shelter veterinarian incentive program  
20 account is an account in the general revenue fund. The account is  
21 composed of:

22 (1) gifts, grants, in-kind contributions, or real or  
23 personal property contributed to the account from any individual,  
24 group, association, or corporation or the United States, subject to  
25 limitations or conditions set by law, for the purposes of this  
26 subchapter;

27 (2) earnings on the principal of the account; and

1           (3) other amounts deposited to the credit of the  
2 account, including:

3                   (A) money deposited from a community or political  
4 subdivision that qualifies under the rules authorized by Section  
5 [56.105](#) to become a sponsor of an eligible participant under the  
6 program; and

7                   (B) legislative appropriations deposited to the  
8 account.

9           SECTION 11. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.