

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1858

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a loan repayment program to encourage the provision of veterinary services in shortage and emergency situations.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 13 (legislative day, NOVEMBER 12), 2003

Mr. COCHRAN (for himself, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. ENSIGN, and Mr. CRAPO) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

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## A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a loan repayment program to encourage the provision of veterinary services in shortage and emergency situations.

- 1        *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
- 2        **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**
- 3        This Act may be cited as the “National Veterinary
- 4        Medical Service Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM**2 **FOR VETERINARY MEDICINE.**

3 The National Agricultural Research, Extension, and  
4 Teaching Policy Act of 1977 is amended by inserting after  
5 section 1415 (7 U.S.C. 3151) the following:

6 **“SEC. 1415A. VETERINARY MEDICINE LOAN REPAYMENT.**7 **“(a) DEFINITIONS.**

8 “In this section:

9 **“(A) QUALIFYING EDUCATIONAL LOAN.—**  
10 The term ‘qualifying educational loan’ means a  
11 government or commercial loan incurred by an  
12 individual to pay for attendance at an accred-  
13 ited college of veterinary medicine resulting in  
14 a degree of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine or  
15 the equivalent, including—

16 “(i) tuition expenses;

17 “(ii) other reasonable educational ex-  
18 penses, including fees, books, and labora-  
19 tory expenses; and

20 “(iii) reasonable living expenses, as  
21 determined by the Secretary.

22 **“(B) VETERINARIAN SHORTAGE SITUA-**  
23 **TION.—**

24 **“(i) IN GENERAL.—**The term ‘veteri-  
25 narian shortage situation’ shall have the  
26 meaning that the Secretary shall prescribe.

1                             “(ii) CONSIDERATIONS.—In determining what constitutes a veterinarian  
2                             shortage situation, the Secretary may consider—  
3  
4

5                             “(I) urban or rural areas that  
6                             the Secretary determines have a  
7                             shortage of veterinarians;

8                             “(II) areas of veterinary practice  
9                             that the Secretary determines have a  
10                            shortage of veterinarians, such as  
11                            public health, epidemiology, and food  
12                            safety;

13                            “(III) areas of veterinary need in  
14                            the Federal Government; and

15                            “(IV) other factors that the Secretary  
16                             considers to be relevant.

17                            “(b) PROGRAM.—

18                            “(1) SERVICE IN VETERINARIAN SHORTAGE  
19                             SITUATIONS.—

20                            “(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of funds under subsection (d), the Secretary shall carry out a program to enter into agreements with veterinarians under which a veterinarian agrees to provide, for a period of time determined by the Secretary and specified

1 in the agreement, veterinary services in veteri-  
2 narian shortage situations.

10       “(2) SERVICE TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN  
11       EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.—The Secretary may enter  
12       into a 1-year agreement with a veterinarian who has  
13       entered into an agreement under paragraph (1) for  
14       the veterinarian to provide service to the Federal  
15       Government in an emergency situation, as deter-  
16       mined by the Secretary, under terms and conditions  
17       specified in the agreement.

18                   “(C) ADDITIONAL ANNUAL LOAN REPAY-  
19                   MENT.—

21        "(c) ADMINISTRATION.—

22               “(1) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may carry  
23               out the program under subsection (b) directly or  
24               through an agreement with another Federal agency  
25               or service provider.

1                   “(2) BREACH REMEDIES.—

2                   “(A) IN GENERAL.—An agreement under  
3                   paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (b) shall pro-  
4                   vide remedies for a breach of the agreement by  
5                   the veterinarian, including repayment or partial  
6                   repayment of financial assistance received, with  
7                   interest.

8                   “(B) AMOUNTS RECOVERED.—Funds re-  
9                   covered under this subsection—

10                   “(i) shall be credited to the account  
11                   available to carry out this section; and

12                   “(ii) shall be available to carry out  
13                   this section without further appropriation  
14                   until expended.

15                   “(C) WAIVER.—If the Secretary deter-  
16                   mines that a veterinarian has breached an  
17                   agreement due to extreme hardship or extreme  
18                   need, the Secretary may grant a waiver of the  
19                   repayment obligation for breach of contract.

20                   “(4) REPAYMENT SCHEDULE.—The Secretary  
21                   may enter into an agreement with the holder of a  
22                   qualifying educational loan for which payments are  
23                   made under this section to establish a schedule for  
24                   the making of payments.

1           “(5) TAX LIABILITY.—In addition to educational  
2           loan repayments, the Secretary shall make  
3           such additional payments to a participating veterinarian  
4           as the Secretary determines to be appropriate  
5           to reimburse the veterinarian for tax liability resulting  
6           from participation in the program under this  
7           section.

8           “(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
9           are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary  
10           to carry out this section, to remain available until  
11           expended.”.

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