

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 159

To expand the workforce of veterinarians specialized in the care and conservation of wild animals and their ecosystems, and to develop educational programs focused on wildlife and zoological veterinary medicine.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 3, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS (for himself and Mr. POLIS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To expand the workforce of veterinarians specialized in the care and conservation of wild animals and their ecosystems, and to develop educational programs focused on wildlife and zoological veterinary medicine.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be referred to as
5 the “Wildlife Veterinarians Employment and Training
6 Act” or the “Wildlife VET Act”.

1 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of
 2 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Purposes.
- Sec. 4. Definitions.
- Sec. 5. Implementing authority and cooperation between departments and agencies.

TITLE I—WILDLIFE AND ZOOLOGICAL VETERINARY MEDICINE WORKFORCE EXPANSION

- Sec. 101. Grants to create positions for wildlife and zoological veterinarians.
- Sec. 102. Loan repayment program for veterinary students and veterinarians specializing in wildlife and zoological populations.
- Sec. 103. Scholarship program for veterinary students specializing in wildlife and zoological populations.

TITLE II—WILDLIFE AND ZOOLOGICAL VETERINARY MEDICINE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Sec. 201. Grants to accredited schools and colleges of veterinary medicine for curricula in wildlife and zoological veterinary medicine.
- Sec. 202. Grants to develop training programs in wildlife and zoological veterinary medicine.

3 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress makes the following findings:

5 (1) Fish and wildlife are important natural re-
 6 sources of the United States. They belong to all citi-
 7 zens, and are managed in perpetuity by State and
 8 Federal conservation agencies, often with significant
 9 assistance from universities, zoos, aquariums, and
 10 nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations.

11 (2) Wildlife and zoological veterinarians are the
 12 primary source of essential health care for wild ani-
 13 mals in their natural habitat and in captivity in fa-
 14 cilities such as zoos, wildlife refuges, breeding re-
 15 serves, and aquariums.

1 (3) Wildlife and zoological veterinarians have
2 the resources and expertise necessary to help re-
3 spond to environmental disasters and address short-
4 term and long-term impacts on wildlife and their
5 habitats. Wildlife and zoological veterinarians have
6 proven to be essential to the rescue and rehabilita-
7 tion efforts in the Gulf of Mexico region following
8 the Deepwater Horizon oil spill that began on April
9 20, 2010.

10 (4) According to the Department of the Inte-
11 rior, wildlife disease expertise and resources are crit-
12 ical to protecting both human and animal life.

13 (5) Wildlife veterinarians have been actively in-
14 volved in preventing, detecting, and responding to
15 such important exotic, dangerous, and zoonotic dis-
16 eases as anthrax, avian influenza, brucellosis, tuber-
17 culosis, West Nile virus, SARS, chronic wasting dis-
18 ease, and foot and mouth disease.

19 (6) Globalization, climate change, and wildlife
20 habitat loss and alteration, along with a growing
21 interface among humans, livestock, and wildlife have
22 increased the threat posed by emerging infectious
23 diseases to humans, domestic animals, and wildlife.

24 (7) According to the February 2009 report by
25 the Government Accountability Office entitled “Vet-

1 erinarian Workforce: Actions Are Needed to Ensure
2 Sufficient Capacity for Protecting Public and Ani-
3 mal Health”, the Nation is facing a growing short-
4 age of veterinarians, and the Federal Government
5 may not have the necessary veterinarian workforce
6 to control pandemic and large-scale outbreaks of dis-
7 ease.

8 (8) There is a shortage of positions for wildlife
9 and zoological veterinarians at the State, Federal,
10 nonprofit, and university levels due to inadequate
11 funding. According to the American Veterinary Med-
12 ical Association (“AVMA”), less than one percent of
13 AVMA members identify themselves as wildlife or
14 zoological veterinarians.

15 (9) According to the AVMA, a growing number
16 of students enter veterinary schools with an interest
17 in wildlife or zoological veterinary medicine, but
18 choose different fields of study and practice due to
19 the small number of positions available for wildlife
20 and zoological veterinarians upon graduation.

21 (10) Veterinary students face large educational
22 debt upon graduation. According to the AVMA,
23 graduating student loan debt averaged \$151,672 in
24 2012, a 6.4 percent increase from 2011.

1 (11) According to the American Association of
2 Wildlife Veterinarians (“AAWV”) and National As-
3 sociation of Federal Veterinarians (“NAFV”), sala-
4 ries for wildlife and zoological veterinarians are rel-
5 atively low compared to the average salaries of vet-
6 erinarians in companion animal medicine. Lower sal-
7 aries, combined with high educational debt and the
8 small number of positions available in wildlife and
9 zoological veterinary medicine, discourage students
10 from pursuing careers in wildlife or zoological veteri-
11 nary medicine.

12 (12) According to the AAWV and NAFV, most
13 schools and colleges of veterinary medicine lack both
14 a comprehensive curriculum and sufficient numbers
15 of formal educational programs specializing in wild-
16 life or zoological veterinary medicine to adequately
17 prepare graduates for a competitive workplace.

18 (13) According to the AVMA, while some train-
19 ing opportunities exist for aspiring wildlife and zoo-
20 logical veterinarians, such opportunities are not
21 available each year, pay low salaries or stipends, if
22 any, and are highly competitive.

23 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

24 The purposes of this Act are—

1 (1) to create new funded positions for wildlife
2 and zoological veterinarians;

3 (2) to limit the amount of educational debt for
4 veterinary medicine students while providing incen-
5 tives to study and practice wildlife or zoological vet-
6 erinary medicine;

7 (3) to help schools and colleges of veterinary
8 medicine develop or improve pilot curricula special-
9 izing in wildlife and zoological veterinary medicine;
10 and

11 (4) to expand the number of training programs
12 in wildlife or zoological veterinary medicine for vet-
13 erinary students.

14 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

15 For purposes of this Act, the following definitions
16 apply:

17 (1) ACCREDITED SCHOOL OR COLLEGE OF VET-
18 ERINARY MEDICINE.—The term “accredited school
19 or college of veterinary medicine” means an institu-
20 tion of higher education (as defined in section 101
21 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
22 1001)) that provides an educational program for
23 which the institution awards a doctoral degree in
24 veterinary medicine.

1 (2) DOCTORAL DEGREE IN VETERINARY MEDI-
2 CINE.—The term “doctoral degree in veterinary
3 medicine” means a doctor of veterinary medicine or
4 veterinary medical doctor from an accredited school
5 or college of veterinary medicine.

6 (3) GRADUATE DEGREE IN VETERINARY MEDI-
7 CINE.—The term “graduate degree in veterinary
8 medicine” means a master’s degree or Ph.D. in vet-
9 erinary medicine or wildlife health management from
10 an accredited school or college of veterinary medicine
11 or a public or nonprofit department or school de-
12 scribed in paragraph (8)(E).

13 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
14 the Secretary of the Interior.

15 (5) STATE OR TERRITORY.—The term “State
16 or Territory” means each of the several States, the
17 District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto
18 Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States
19 Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the North-
20 ern Mariana Islands, and each federally recognized
21 Indian tribe.

22 (6) VETERINARY MEDICINE.—The term “veteri-
23 nary medicine” means all branches of, and special-
24 ties included within, the practice of veterinary medi-
25 cine, including—

1 (A) the diagnosis, treatment, correction,
2 change, alleviation, prevention, management of,
3 or research on animal disease, illness, pain, de-
4 formity, defect, injury, or other physical, dental,
5 or mental conditions; and

6 (B) the management of ecosystems on
7 which wildlife and zoological populations de-
8 pend.

9 (7) WILDLIFE.—The term “wildlife” means any
10 member of the animal kingdom and includes mam-
11 mals, fish, birds, amphibians, reptiles, mollusks, or
12 arthropods. Such term does not include plant or
13 plant matter or any other member of another king-
14 dom.

15 (8) WILDLIFE OR VETERINARY INSTITUTION.—
16 The term “wildlife or veterinary institution”
17 means—

18 (A) any agency or department of a State
19 or Territory or of the Federal Government that
20 employs wildlife or zoological veterinarians, in-
21 cluding a wildlife conservation or natural re-
22 source management agency;

23 (B) a nonprofit wildlife conservation orga-
24 nization;

1 (C) an accredited zoo or aquarium receiv-
2 ing peer-reviewed accreditation from a commis-
3 sioned organization that heeds rigorous publicly
4 available standards, utilizes notable experts in
5 the field to conduct comprehensive inspection
6 and review, and provides opportunity for public
7 input;

8 (D) an accredited school or college of vet-
9 erinary medicine;

10 (E) a public or nonprofit department of
11 comparative medicine, department of veterinary
12 science, department of the environment and
13 natural resources, school of public health, or
14 school of medicine that is accredited by a na-
15 tionally recognized accrediting agency or asso-
16 ciation recognized by the Secretary of Edu-
17 cation;

18 (F) a State or Territory, national, allied,
19 or regional veterinary organization or specialty
20 board recognized by the American Veterinary
21 Medical Association; or

22 (G) a university research foundation or
23 veterinary medical foundation.

24 (9) WILDLIFE OR ZOOLOGICAL VETERI-
25 NARIAN.—The term “wildlife or zoological veteri-

1 narian” means an individual who has received a doc-
2 toral degree in veterinary medicine from an accred-
3 ited school or college of veterinary medicine and
4 practices veterinary medicine as applied to wildlife
5 populations—

6 (A) in their natural habitat; or

7 (B) in captivity in conservation centers in-
8 cluding zoos, aquariums, wildlife refuges, and
9 breeding reserves.

10 **SEC. 5. IMPLEMENTING AUTHORITY AND COOPERATION**
11 **BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.**

12 The Secretary of the Interior shall carry out this Act.
13 In carrying out this Act, the Secretary shall cooperate
14 with the heads of such other departments and agencies
15 of the Federal Government as the Secretary determines
16 necessary.

17 **TITLE I—WILDLIFE AND ZOO-**
18 **LOGICAL VETERINARY MEDI-**
19 **CINE WORKFORCE EXPAN-**
20 **SION**

21 **SEC. 101. GRANTS TO CREATE POSITIONS FOR WILDLIFE**
22 **AND ZOOLOGICAL VETERINARIANS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—To create additional clinical and
24 research positions for wildlife and zoological veterinarians,
25 the Secretary may award grants to wildlife or veterinary

1 institutions that submit to the Secretary a proposal de-
2 signed to create such positions. A proposal—

3 (1) shall be submitted at such time, and in such
4 form and manner, as the Secretary may require; and

5 (2) shall contain such information as the Sec-
6 retary may require, including a description of—

7 (A) each such position;

8 (B) the need of the wildlife or veterinary
9 institution for each such position;

10 (C) how each such position will advance
11 the conservation and management of wildlife or
12 zoological populations; and

13 (D) how the wildlife or veterinary institu-
14 tion will use funds awarded under a grant.

15 (b) AWARD.—The Secretary shall establish proce-
16 dures to ensure that, under this section, proposals are rig-
17 orously reviewed and grants are competitively awarded
18 based on such considerations as the Secretary may deter-
19 mine necessary. Such considerations shall include—

20 (1) the ability of a wildlife or veterinary institu-
21 tion to describe and justify the need for each posi-
22 tion in its proposal under subsection (a)(2); and

23 (2) the ability of the wildlife or veterinary insti-
24 tution to create such positions.

1 (c) PREFERENCE.—In awarding a grant under this
2 section, the Secretary shall give preference to wildlife or
3 veterinary institutions that will create positions in areas
4 of need, including—

- 5 (1) wildlife disease research;
- 6 (2) disease surveillance;
- 7 (3) wildlife disease training;
- 8 (4) ecology and wildlife population manage-
9 ment; and
- 10 (5) conservation and management of the health
11 of endangered, threatened, and sensitive species.

12 (d) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The amount of a grant
13 made to a wildlife or veterinary institution under this sec-
14 tion shall be determined by the Secretary, taking into ac-
15 count such factors as the Secretary may consider appro-
16 priate, including—

- 17 (1) the contents of the proposal submitted by
18 the wildlife or veterinary institution under subsection
19 (a); and
- 20 (2) the number of grants available to all wildlife
21 or veterinary institutions.

22 (e) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts received under a
23 grant under this section shall only be used by a wildlife
24 or veterinary institution for purposes determined by the
25 Secretary to be appropriate to create and support posi-

1 tions created under the proposal submitted by the wildlife
2 or veterinary institution under subsection (a), including
3 the payment of—

4 (1) salaries for such positions; and

5 (2) costs associated with the acquisition of ma-
6 terial and equipment necessary for the creation of
7 the additional positions.

8 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
9 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
10 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021.
11 Amounts appropriated under this subsection are author-
12 ized to remain available until expended.

13 **SEC. 102. LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM FOR VETERINARY**
14 **STUDENTS AND VETERINARIANS SPECIAL-**
15 **IZING IN WILDLIFE AND ZOOLOGICAL POPU-**
16 **LATIONS.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—To expand the workforce of wild-
18 life and zoological veterinarians, the Secretary shall estab-
19 lish a program, to be known as the “Wildlife and Zoolog-
20 ical Veterinary Workforce Loan Repayment Program” to
21 enter into agreements with eligible individuals to make
22 payments on their behalf for repayment of their edu-
23 cational loans.

1 (b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL.—For purposes of this
2 section, an individual shall be treated as an eligible indi-
3 vidual if the individual—

4 (1) is a United States citizen, national, or law-
5 ful permanent resident;

6 (2) either—

7 (A) has received, not before the date that
8 is 10 years prior to the date on which the indi-
9 vidual submits an application under paragraph
10 (3)—

11 (i) a doctoral degree in veterinary
12 medicine; or

13 (ii) a graduate degree in veterinary
14 medicine, providing that the individual re-
15 ceived such degree after receiving a doc-
16 toral degree in veterinary medicine,
17 that has been approved by the Secretary for
18 purposes of this section; or

19 (B) is enrolled in a full-time or part-time
20 program that—

21 (i) leads to—

22 (I) a doctoral degree in veteri-
23 nary medicine; or

24 (II) a graduate degree in veteri-
25 nary medicine, providing that the indi-

1 vidual has received a doctoral degree
2 in veterinary medicine; and

3 (ii) has been approved by the Sec-
4 retary for purposes of this section; and

5 (3) has prepared and submitted to the Sec-
6 retary an application at such time and in such form
7 and manner as is specified by the Secretary.

8 (c) AGREEMENT.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—No payment shall be made
10 on behalf of an eligible individual under the Wildlife
11 and Zoological Veterinary Workforce Loan Repay-
12 ment Program unless the eligible individual has en-
13 tered into an agreement with the Secretary under
14 this subsection.

15 (2) CONTENTS.—An agreement under this sub-
16 section shall contain—

17 (A) an agreement by the Secretary to
18 make payments under subsection (e); and

19 (B) an agreement by the eligible indi-
20 vidual—

21 (i) to serve for a period of no fewer
22 than 4 consecutive years at a wildlife or
23 veterinary institution as—

24 (I) a full-time wildlife or zoolog-
25 ical veterinarian; or

1 (II) with the approval of the Sec-
2 retary, a part-time wildlife or zoolog-
3 ical veterinarian, if no full-time posi-
4 tions are available; and

5 (ii) to complete the service in clause
6 (i) not later than 10 years after the later
7 of the date on which the eligible indi-
8 vidual—

9 (I) receives a doctoral or grad-
10 uate degree in veterinary medicine
11 under subsection (b)(2); and

12 (II) enters into the agreement
13 under subsection (a).

14 (d) PREFERENCE.—In making payments under this
15 section, the Secretary shall give preference to an eligible
16 individual who—

17 (1) holds or is pursuing a doctoral or graduate
18 degree in veterinary medicine with a specialty in
19 wildlife or zoological veterinary medicine; or

20 (2) is currently practicing wildlife or zoological
21 veterinary medicine.

22 (e) PAYMENTS.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Payments on behalf of an el-
24 igible individual under this section shall include pay-
25 ment of the principal and interest on the govern-

1 ment loans of the eligible individual, to the extent
2 that the loans cover such expenses as are determined
3 by the Secretary to be associated with obtaining a
4 doctoral or graduate degree in veterinary medicine
5 under subsection (b)(2), including—

6 (A) tuition expenses;

7 (B) reasonable living expenses; and

8 (C) all other reasonable educational ex-
9 penses incurred by the grantee, including fees,
10 laboratory expenses, and expenses for books
11 and equipment.

12 (2) AMOUNT.—

13 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the limita-
14 tions in subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall
15 develop regulations to determine the amounts of
16 payments for each eligible individual under this
17 section, considering factors including—

18 (i) the degree held or pursued by the
19 eligible individual;

20 (ii) the training programs in which
21 the eligible individual has participated;

22 (iii) the total loan balance paid by the
23 eligible individual;

24 (iv) the extent to which such deter-
25 mination affects the ability of the Sec-

retary to maximize the number of agreements that can be provided under this section from the amounts appropriated for such agreements; and

(v) the extent to which such determination provides an incentive to serve as a wildlife or zoological veterinarian.

(B) LIMITATIONS.—Payments on behalf of an eligible individual under this section shall not exceed, for each year of service under subsection (c)(2)(B)(i)—

(i) \$35,000 in aggregate; or

(ii) if the total loans of the eligible individual are less than \$140,000, an amount that does not exceed an amount that is two-thirds of the eligible loan balance.

(3) PAYMENT SCHEDULE.—The Secretary may enter into an agreement with the holder of any loan for which payments are made to establish a schedule for making payments under this subsection.

(f) BREACH OF AGREEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), in the case of any agreement entered into under subsection (a), an eligible individual shall be

1 liable to the Federal Government for an amount, as
2 determined by the Secretary, not to exceed the total
3 amount of any payments made by the Secretary on
4 behalf of the eligible individual under this section,
5 and for interest on such amount at the maximum
6 legal prevailing rate, as determined by the Treasurer
7 of the United States, if the eligible individual fails
8 to meet a term of the agreement in subsection
9 (c)(2)(B).

10 (2) DEATH.—Any obligation of an eligible indi-
11 vidual under the Wildlife and Zoological Veterinary
12 Workforce Loan Repayment Program for service or
13 payment of damages shall be canceled upon the
14 death of the eligible individual.

15 (3) WAIVER OR SUSPENSION OF LIABILITY.—
16 The Secretary shall provide for the partial or total
17 waiver or suspension of liability under paragraph
18 (1), or of an obligation under subsection (c)(2), if—

19 (A) the eligible individual is called to active
20 duty in the Armed Forces of the United States;

21 (B) compliance by the eligible individual
22 with the agreement is impossible or would cause
23 extreme hardship to the eligible individual; or

1 (C) enforcement of the agreement with re-
2 spect to the eligible individual would be uncon-
3 scionable.

4 (4) DATE CERTAIN FOR RECOVERY.—Any
5 amount that the Federal Government is entitled to
6 recover under paragraph (1) shall be paid to the
7 United States not later than 3 years after the date
8 on which the United States becomes so entitled.

9 (5) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts recovered under
10 paragraph (1) shall be available to the Secretary for
11 making payments under this section and shall re-
12 main available for such purpose until expended.

13 (6) REGULATIONS.—Prior to implementation of
14 the Wildlife and Zoological Veterinary Workforce
15 Loan Repayment Program, the Secretary shall es-
16 tablish, by regulation, procedures for determining
17 the amount of the repayment required under para-
18 graph (1).

19 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
20 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
21 \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021.
22 Amounts appropriated under this subsection are author-
23 ized to remain available until expended.

1 **SEC. 103. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR VETERINARY STU-**
2 **DENTS SPECIALIZING IN WILDLIFE AND ZOO-**
3 **LOGICAL POPULATIONS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—To expand the workforce of wild-
5 life and zoological veterinarians, the Secretary shall estab-
6 lish and carry out a program, to be known as the “Wildlife
7 and Zoological Veterinary Workforce Scholarship Pro-
8 gram”, under which the Secretary shall enter into agree-
9 ments with eligible students to award such eligible stu-
10 dents scholarships for serving as wildlife or zoological vet-
11 erinarians at wildlife or veterinary institutions upon grad-
12 uation from an accredited school or college of veterinary
13 medicine.

14 (b) ELIGIBLE STUDENT.—For purposes of this sec-
15 tion, an individual shall be treated as an eligible student
16 if the individual—

17 (1) is a United States citizen, national, or a
18 lawful permanent resident;

19 (2) is enrolled full-time, or has been accepted
20 for full-time enrollment, at an accredited school or
21 college of veterinary medicine;

22 (3) enrolls or plans to enroll, at the accredited
23 school or college of veterinary medicine in paragraph
24 (2), in a course of study or program that specializes
25 or offers courses in wildlife and zoological veterinary
26 medicine, or any other course of study or program

1 that has been approved by the Secretary for the pur-
2 poses of this section; and

3 (4) has submitted to the Secretary an applica-
4 tion, and a written contract under subsection (d), at
5 such time and in such form and manner as is speci-
6 fied by the Secretary.

7 (c) AWARD.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—No scholarship shall be
9 awarded to an eligible student under the Wildlife
10 and Zoological Veterinary Workforce Scholarship
11 Program until the Secretary has accepted the appli-
12 cation and written contract submitted by the eligible
13 student under subsection (b)(4).

14 (2) NOTICE.—The Secretary shall provide
15 prompt written notice to an individual upon the ac-
16 ceptance by the Secretary, under paragraph (1), of
17 a written contract.

18 (d) WRITTEN CONTRACT.—A written contract be-
19 tween the Secretary and an eligible student under this
20 subsection shall contain—

21 (1) an agreement by the Secretary to provide
22 the eligible student with a scholarship for each year
23 of the course of study or program described in sub-
24 section (b)(3), for a period of no more than 4 years;

25 (2) an agreement by the eligible student to—

1 (A) accept the scholarship;

2 (B) maintain enrollment in the approved
3 course of study or program described in sub-
4 section (b)(3) until the individual completes the
5 course of study or program;

6 (C) maintain, over the course of the course
7 of study or program described in subsection
8 (b)(3), such level of academic standing as is de-
9 termined by the accredited school or college of
10 veterinary medicine, under regulations pre-
11 scribed by the Secretary, to be acceptable;

12 (D) commence service at a wildlife or vet-
13 erinary institution no later than 4 years after
14 the date the eligible student graduates from the
15 accredited school or college of veterinary medi-
16 cine; and

17 (E) serve at the wildlife or veterinary insti-
18 tution in subparagraph (D) for a period of no
19 fewer than 4 consecutive years as—

20 (i) a full-time wildlife or zoological
21 veterinarian; or

22 (ii) with the approval of the Secretary,
23 a part-time wildlife or zoological veteri-
24 narian, if no full-time positions are avail-
25 able;

1 (3) a provision that any financial obligation of
2 the United States arising out of a contract entered
3 into under this section and any obligation of the in-
4 dividual which is conditioned thereon, is contingent
5 upon funds being appropriated for scholarships
6 under this section;

7 (4) a statement of the damages to which the
8 United States shall be entitled, under subsection (i),
9 for a breach of contract; and

10 (5) such other statements of the rights and li-
11 abilities of the Secretary and of the individual as are
12 not inconsistent with the provisions of this title.

13 (e) AMOUNT OF SCHOLARSHIP.—With respect to an
14 eligible student:

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the limitation in
16 paragraph (2), in determining the amount of a
17 scholarship, the Secretary shall consider factors in-
18 cluding—

19 (A) the degree that the eligible student is
20 pursuing or plans to pursue;

21 (B) educational costs;

22 (C) the financial need of the eligible stu-
23 dent;

24 (D) the extent to which such determination
25 affects the ability of the Secretary to maximize

1 the number of scholarships that can be provided
2 under this section from the amounts appro-
3 priated for such scholarships; and

4 (E) the extent to which such determination
5 provides an incentive to serve as a wildlife or
6 zoological veterinarian.

7 (2) LIMITATION.—The amount of a scholarship
8 shall not exceed \$35,000 for any school year.

9 (f) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts received under a
10 scholarship under this section shall be used to cover such
11 expenses, with respect to an eligible student, as are deter-
12 mined by the Secretary to be appropriate, including—

13 (1) tuition expenses;

14 (2) reasonable living expenses; and

15 (3) all other reasonable educational expenses in-
16 curred by the eligible student, including fees, labora-
17 tory expenses, and expenses for books and equip-
18 ment.

19 (g) PAYMENTS TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION.—
20 Under the Wildlife and Zoological Veterinary Workforce
21 Scholarship Program, the Secretary may contract with the
22 accredited school or college of veterinary medicine in which
23 an eligible student is enrolled or has been accepted for
24 enrollment to make payments for tuition, reasonable living

1 expenses, and other reasonable educational expenses under
2 subsection (f).

3 (h) BREACH OF CONTRACT.—

4 (1) LIABILITY.—Subject to paragraphs (2) and
5 (3), an eligible student who has entered into a writ-
6 ten contract with the Secretary under this section
7 shall be liable to the United States for the following
8 amounts:

9 (A) FAILURE TO COMPLETE COURSE OF
10 STUDY OR PROGRAM.—The eligible student
11 shall be liable for the total amount that has
12 been paid to the eligible student under this sec-
13 tion, and for interest on such amount at the
14 maximum legal prevailing rate, as determined
15 by the Treasurer of the United States, if, under
16 the course of study or program under sub-
17 section (b)(2), the eligible student—

18 (i) fails to maintain an acceptable
19 level of academic standing under sub-
20 section (d)(2)(C);

21 (ii) is dismissed from the accredited
22 school or college of veterinary medicine for
23 disciplinary reasons; or

24 (iii) voluntarily ceases to participate
25 in the course of study or program before

1 completion of the course of study or pro-
2 gram.

3 (B) FAILURE TO COMPLETE SERVICE OB-
4 LIGATION.—The eligible student shall be liable
5 for an amount, as determined by the Secretary,
6 not to exceed the total amount that has been
7 awarded to the eligible student under this sec-
8 tion, and for interest on such amount at the
9 maximum legal prevailing rate, as determined
10 by the Treasurer of the United States, if the el-
11 igible student fails to begin or complete the
12 service obligation under subsection (d)(2)(D).

13 (2) DEATH.—Any obligation of an eligible stu-
14 dent under the Wildlife and Zoological Veterinary
15 Workforce Scholarship Program for service or pay-
16 ment of damages shall be canceled upon the death
17 of the eligible student.

18 (3) WAIVER OR SUSPENSION OF LIABILITY.—
19 The Secretary shall provide for the partial or total
20 waiver or suspension of liability under paragraph
21 (1), or of an obligation under subsection (d)(2), if—

22 (A) the eligible student is called to active
23 duty in the Armed Forces of the United States;

24 (B) compliance by the eligible student with
25 the written contract is impossible or would

1 cause extreme hardship to the eligible student;
2 or

3 (C) enforcement of the written contract
4 with respect to the eligible student would be un-
5 conscionable.

6 (4) DATE CERTAIN FOR RECOVERY.—Any
7 amount that the Federal Government is entitled to
8 recover under paragraph (1) shall be paid to the
9 United States not later than 3 years after the date
10 the United States becomes so entitled.

11 (5) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts recovered under
12 paragraph (1) shall be available to the Secretary for
13 making loan repayments under this section and shall
14 remain available for such purpose until expended.

15 (6) REGULATIONS.—Prior to implementation of
16 the Wildlife and Zoological Veterinary Workforce
17 Scholarship Program, the Secretary shall establish,
18 by regulation, procedures for determining the
19 amount of the repayment required under paragraph
20 (1).

21 (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
22 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
23 \$3,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021.
24 Amounts appropriated under this subsection are author-
25 ized to remain available until expended.

1 **TITLE II—WILDLIFE AND ZOO-**
2 **LOGICAL VETERINARY MEDI-**
3 **CINE EDUCATIONAL DEVEL-**
4 **OPMENT**

5 **SEC. 201. GRANTS TO ACCREDITED SCHOOLS AND COL-**
6 **LEGES OF VETERINARY MEDICINE FOR CUR-**
7 **RICULA IN WILDLIFE AND ZOOLOGICAL VET-**
8 **ERINARY MEDICINE.**

9 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after
10 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall es-
11 tablish a pilot program to award grants to accredited
12 schools and colleges of veterinary medicine to develop or
13 improve new or existing curricula that specialize in wildlife
14 or zoological veterinary medicine, to be available to veteri-
15 nary students in the final years of a program for which
16 the accredited schools or colleges of veterinary medicine
17 award a doctoral degree in veterinary medicine.

18 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for a grant under
19 this section, an accredited school or college of veterinary
20 medicine shall submit to the Secretary a proposal—

21 (1) at such time and in such form and manner
22 as the Secretary may require; and

23 (2) containing such information as the Sec-
24 retary may require, including a description of—

1 (A) the proposed curriculum in wildlife or
2 zoological veterinary medicine under subsection
3 (a); and

4 (B) how the accredited school or college of
5 veterinary medicine will use funds provided
6 under the grant.

7 (c) AWARD.—The Secretary shall establish proce-
8 dures to ensure that proposals are rigorously reviewed and
9 that grants are competitively awarded.

10 (d) AMOUNT.—The Secretary shall determine the
11 amount of a grant awarded to an accredited school or col-
12 lege of veterinary medicine under this section, taking into
13 account such factors as the Secretary considers appro-
14 priate, including—

15 (1) the contents of the proposal submitted by
16 the eligible accredited school or college of veterinary
17 medicine under subsection (b); and

18 (2) the number of grants available to all accred-
19 ited schools or colleges of veterinary medicine.

20 (e) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—Amounts received
21 under a grant under this section shall be used to pay ex-
22 penses related to the curriculum described in subsection
23 (b)(2)(A) that are determined by the Secretary to be ap-
24 propriate, including the expense of—

25 (1) developing the curriculum;

1 (2) paying for the costs associated with the de-
2 velopment of the curriculum, including faculty sala-
3 ries and the costs of acquisition of material and
4 equipment; and

5 (3) providing the curriculum.

6 (f) REPORTS.—

7 (1) GRANTEES.—At the end of each calendar
8 year, each school that has received a grant under
9 this section for such year shall submit to the Sec-
10 retary a report, in such form and manner and con-
11 taining such information as the Secretary may re-
12 quire, on the effectiveness of the curriculum devel-
13 oped by the school.

14 (2) SECRETARY.—Not later than 6 months
15 after completion of the pilot program established
16 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall evaluate
17 the curriculum developed by each school that has re-
18 ceived a grant under this section and submit to Con-
19 gress a report on the pilot program—

20 (A) in such form and manner as Congress
21 may require; and

22 (B) containing such information as Con-
23 gress may require, including—

1 (i) the names of the accredited schools
 2 and colleges of veterinary medicine that re-
 3 ceived a grant under this section;

4 (ii) the number of students enrolled in
 5 each curriculum developed with grant
 6 funds;

7 (iii) a description of each curriculum
 8 developed with grant funds;

9 (iv) an assessment of the effectiveness
 10 of the pilot program; and

11 (v) the recommendations of the Sec-
 12 retary regarding the extension or expan-
 13 sion of the pilot program.

14 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
 15 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
 16 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021.
 17 Amounts appropriated under this subsection are author-
 18 ized to remain available until expended.

19 **SEC. 202. GRANTS TO DEVELOP TRAINING PROGRAMS IN**
 20 **WILDLIFE AND ZOOLOGICAL VETERINARY**
 21 **MEDICINE.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award com-
 23 petitive grants to eligible wildlife or veterinary institutions
 24 to establish or expand, for traineeship candidates, training
 25 programs that will enhance the ability of a trainee to prac-

1 tice as a wildlife or zoological veterinarian, as determined
 2 by the Secretary of the Interior. Such training programs
 3 may include externship, internship, fellowship, or resi-
 4 dency programs.

5 (b) ELIGIBLE WILDLIFE OR VETERINARY INSTITU-
 6 TION.—To be eligible for a grant under this section, a
 7 wildlife or veterinary institution shall submit to the Sec-
 8 retary a proposal designed to create or expand one or more
 9 training programs for traineeship candidates. The pro-
 10 posal—

11 (1) shall be submitted at such time and in such
 12 form and manner as the Secretary may require; and

13 (2) shall contain such information as the Sec-
 14 retary may require, including a description of—

15 (A) each training program to be created or
 16 expanded;

17 (B) the skills to be imparted by each train-
 18 ing program;

19 (C) how the wildlife or veterinary institu-
 20 tion will use the funds provided under a grant;
 21 and

22 (D) how each training program will help a
 23 trainee advance conservation and management
 24 goals for wildlife or zoological animal popu-
 25 lations.

1 (c) CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS.—

2 (1) PREFERENCE.—In awarding a grant under
3 this section, the Secretary shall give preference to an
4 eligible wildlife or veterinary institution offering a
5 training program—

6 (A) at rotating sites, particularly in the
7 case of a residency program; and

8 (B) under which trainees conduct research
9 and teach veterinary students.

10 (2) PROCEDURES.—The Secretary shall estab-
11 lish procedures to ensure that proposals are rigor-
12 ously reviewed and that grants are competitively
13 awarded.

14 (d) TRAINEESHIP CANDIDATE.—For purposes of this
15 section, an individual shall be treated as a traineeship can-
16 didate if the individual—

17 (1) is a citizen of the United States, a national,
18 or a lawful permanent resident;

19 (2) expresses a profound interest in wildlife or
20 zoological veterinary medicine and a commitment to
21 becoming a wildlife or zoological veterinarian; and

22 (3) has submitted to a wildlife or veterinary in-
23 stitution offering a training program under sub-
24 section (a) an application for the training program

1 containing such information as may be required by
2 the wildlife or veterinary institution.

3 (e) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER TRAINING PRO-
4 GRAM.—Under a training program, a trainee shall, for the
5 duration of the training program, be provided with—

6 (1) a stipend, in an amount based on criteria
7 to be determined by the wildlife or veterinary insti-
8 tution, including—

9 (A) the type and length of the training
10 program;

11 (B) the responsibilities assigned to the
12 trainee as part of the training program;

13 (C) the academic level or degree held by
14 the trainee; and

15 (D) the relevant experience of the trainee;
16 and

17 (2) such other financial assistance as the wild-
18 life or veterinary institution determines necessary
19 and is approved by the Secretary.

20 (f) APPROVAL OF PLACEMENT UNDER TRAINING
21 PROGRAM.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—No traineeship candidate
23 shall be placed in a training program without the
24 approval of the Secretary.

1 (2) NOTICE.—A traineeship candidate shall be
2 informed of placement in a training program upon
3 approval by the Secretary.

4 (g) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The Secretary shall deter-
5 mine the amount of a grant awarded under this section
6 for a training program, taking into account such factors
7 as the Secretary considers appropriate, including—

8 (1) the type of training that the wildlife or vet-
9 erinary institution desires to create or expand;

10 (2) the contents of the proposal submitted by
11 the wildlife or veterinary institution under subsection
12 (b); and

13 (3) the number of grants available to all wildlife
14 or veterinary institutions.

15 (h) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—Under this section,
16 amounts received under a grant shall be applied to such
17 costs as the Secretary considers appropriate for the plan-
18 ning, development, and operation of the training program,
19 including the costs associated with—

20 (1) the development of the curriculum to be
21 used in the program;

22 (2) practicum experiences;

23 (3) the acquisition of new equipment; and

24 (4) the stipend and other financial assistance
25 provided to the trainee under subsection (e).

1 (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
3 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021.
4 Amounts appropriated under this subsection are author-
5 ized to remain available until expended.

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