

- SUBJECT:** Requiring the licensure of registered veterinarian technicians
- COMMITTEE:** Agriculture and Livestock — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — T. King, Anderson, M. González, Kacal, Kleinschmidt, Springer, White
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Elizabeth Choate and Tracy Colvin, Texas Veterinary Medical Association; Cynthia Dittmar and James Sessum, Texas Association of Registered Veterinary Technicians; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ashley Chadwick, Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas; Sandra Nunn, Texas Association of Registered Veterinary Technicians; Darren Turley, Texas Association of Dairymen; Bob Turner, Texas Poultry Federation; Andrea Walker, Texas Veterinary Medical Association; Rick Hardcastle; Randy Lee)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Dustin Matocha, Texans for Fiscal Responsibility)
- On — Nicole Oria, Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ina Franz, Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners)
- BACKGROUND:** Currently, 38 states license veterinary technicians. In Texas, technicians are not licensed through the state, but “registered” through Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) as registered veterinary technicians. To become a registered veterinary technician a person must have an associate’s degree from an accredited veterinary technology school and pass the veterinary technology national exam.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1621 would amend the Occupations Code relating to the regulation and practice of veterinary medicine by requiring the Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (TSBVME), by rule, to license and regulate veterinary technicians.
- The TSBVME could appoint advisory committees and require the development of a jurisprudence examination for licensed veterinary

technicians.

The bill would establish qualifications for a licensed veterinary technician, and require a licensed veterinary technician employed in a veterinary hospital to display their license.

The bill would enable the TSBVME to investigate complaints received, deny licenses, and take disciplinary action against veterinary technicians.

Decisions relating to the diagnosis, treatment, management, and future disposition of an animal patient would be made by a supervising veterinarian who would determine the appropriate level of supervision and protocol for a task delegated to a licensed veterinary technician, certified veterinary assistant, or veterinary assistant, giving consideration to the person's level of training and experience. The bill would allow a supervising veterinarian to delegate greater responsibility to a licensed veterinary technician than to a certified veterinary assistant or a veterinary assistant.

The bill would establish a scope of practice for the duties performed by veterinary technicians, certified veterinary assistants, and veterinary assistants under the supervision of a veterinarian. The bill also would provide grounds for denial of a license and disciplinary action.

The TSBVME would be required to issue a veterinary technician license by September 1, 2014 and to adopt rules, procedures, fees, and the jurisprudence examination by June 1, 2014.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2013.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

Changing the credential for veterinary technicians from a registration to a license would improve the perception of a veterinary technician as an educated and skilled professional and by extension improve the perception of the practice of veterinary medicine. Many veterinarians view technician licensure as part of the natural progression of the profession, but rather than being licensed through the state, veterinary technicians are registered through the Texas Veterinary Medical Association.

Currently, 38 other states award a license for similar qualifications as required by the association. By establishing a licensure for veterinary technicians, CSHB 1621 also would increase the incentive to seek a higher

level of education and broaden the appeal of entering the profession, thus increasing the pool of educated employees.

The bill would define allowed duties for both credentialed veterinary technicians and veterinary assistants to know exactly what duties they could and could not perform and help prevent misrepresentation of education and credentialing both to the public and to employers.

Currently, TVMA is unable to investigate and evaluate complaints against technicians. CSHB 1621 would allow for action to be taken if a veterinary technician acted unethically or illegally.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Because the Texas State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (TSBVME) is statutorily required to cover the cost of its operations with fee-generated revenue, the agency would have to assess additional fees to cover the costs associated with implementing the bill.