

Public Policy Position
HB 4220, HB 4221, SB 193, SB 194

The Animal Law Section is a voluntary membership section of the State Bar of Michigan, comprised of 250 members. The Animal Law Section is not the State Bar of Michigan and the position expressed herein is that of the Animal Law Section only and not the State Bar of Michigan. To date, the State Bar does not have a position on this item.

The Animal Law Section has a public policy decision-making body with 15 members. On May 12, 2025, the Section adopted its position after an electronic discussion and vote. 11 members voted in favor of the Section's position, 0 members voted against this position, 0 members abstained, 4 members did not vote.

Support

Explanation:

The Animal Law Section supports HB 4220 and HB 4221/SB 193 and SB 194, which would allow a veterinarian to establish a veterinarian-client-patient relationship and provide care to an animal via telehealth without the requirement of a prior in-person examination of the animal. An estimated 50 million pets go without veterinary care, with 25% of pet owners experiencing barriers to seeking care. Many urban and rural areas lack geographically convenient veterinary offices and even where veterinarians are geographically accessible, a lack of transportation, disability, the cost of care, and the long wait for in-person appointments can create barriers to accessing veterinary care. These factors disproportionately affect low-income families, resulting in inequity in access to veterinary care. Telehealth offers a safe, convenient, and affordable treatment option. As is the case with human medicine, licensed veterinarians should be empowered to exercise their professional discretion to determine when providing care via telehealth is appropriate.

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