



AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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The Honorable Donald Manzullo
House Small Business Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Manzullo:

On behalf of the American Veterinary Medical Association, I am writing to thank you for introducing the Self-Employed Health Care Affordability Act of 2003 (H.R. 1873). The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has placed this bill among the AVMA's highest legislative priorities for "active pursuit of passage."

This important legislation will free veterinarians and other self-employed individuals from the unfair disadvantage of paying for health care premiums with funds reduced by both sides of the payroll tax. This "self-employment tax" is unfairly levied against the individual entrepreneur but not against corporate entities. In the current climate of high health insurance premiums, this tax inequity results in significant added expenses for small businesses.

The American Veterinary Medical Association's membership of 70,000 is composed of over 86% of the nation's veterinarians. In order to provide expert scientific animal medical care for our communities and our livestock industry, these veterinarians must also assume the role of self-employed small business owners. In essence, they own and operate private hospitals in order to practice veterinary medicine. In this additional role of small business owner, veterinarians further support communities by providing employment and by purchasing goods and services. Removal of the "self-employment tax" will benefit our profession just as it will other entrepreneurs.

In the current climate of rapidly escalating health care costs, this legislation will ease the financial burden of purchasing health insurance. Correcting the current inequity in the tax code will reduce the number of uninsured Americans. The AVMA is pleased to support the Self-Employed Health Care Affordability Act of 2003 (H.R. 1873).

Sincerely,

<signature on file>

Jack O. Walther, D.V.M.

President