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To: House Committee on Agriculture
Representative Kyle Hoffman, Chair

From: Tucker A. Stewart, Associate Counsel

Re: **Support for HB 2552, Relating to the number of first-year veterinary students that may enter into the veterinary training program for rural Kansas**

Date: February 12, 2018

The Kansas Livestock Association (KLA), formed in 1894, is a trade association representing nearly 5,200 members on legislative and regulatory issues. KLA members are involved in many aspects of the livestock industry, including seed stock, cow-calf and stocker cattle production, cattle feeding, dairy production, swine production, grazing land management, and diversified farming operations.

The Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) is supportive of the "Veterinary Training Program for Rural Kansas" and is a proponent of authorizing the expansion of the program in HB 2552. KLA encourages support to any reasonable effort that encourages veterinarians with large animal health training to locate in rural Kansas. I call your attention to subsection (d), which requires participants in the loan program to "complete all advanced training in public health, livestock biosecurity, foreign animal disease diagnosis, regulatory veterinary medicine and zoonotic disease..." This emphasis reminds us that veterinarians serve an important role in animal and human health in our local communities.

While commonly referred to as the "Wheat State," Kansas might more accurately be described as the "Beef State." The beef industry is the largest segment of agriculture in the state, with cattle generating \$7.8 billion in cash receipts in 2016. Every segment of the beef industry can be found in Kansas. We have some of the top genetics suppliers in the country. Our cow-calf and stocker segments utilize our abundant forage resources. Kansas cattle feeders add value to locally-grown feed grains while finishing cattle. And finally, the processing segment converts those finished cattle to delicious beef enjoyed by consumers around the world. There is no doubt the beef industry is of significant importance to the Kansas economy. That also means much is at risk. A disease outbreak could be devastating to Kansas beef producers. The program helps to put veterinarians in Rural areas and helps to mitigate the risk of a disease outbreak.

It appears this program is fulfilling its original purpose that was envisioned with the passage of legislation in 2006. We suggest it's appropriate to expand this program and allow the Kansas State University Veterinary College to offer this opportunity to more students in the future.