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December 15, 2023

Interim Joint Committee on Agriculture
Kentucky General Assembly
700 Capital Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601

Members of the Interim Joint Committee on Agriculture:

I am writing to offer my utmost support for the proposal offered by Murray State University to develop an accredited school of veterinary medicine on their campus to address the growing demand for rural, large animal veterinarians.

Murray State's Hutson School of Agriculture already houses the largest undergraduate Pre-Veterinary and Veterinary Technology Program in the Commonwealth, and I have no doubt they are well-positioned to quickly establish themselves as a prestigious destination for students seeking professional veterinary education. When combined with the groundbreaking and crucial research performed at their main campus and the Breathitt Veterinary Center, one of 23 nationwide diagnostic laboratories designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a Level 1 facility within the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, they are ideally situated to fill the Commonwealth's void of institutions offering Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degrees.

According to a feasibility study conducted by Murray State, there are only 54 veterinarians in Kentucky dedicated to full-time services of large animals, and this glaring need is further compounded by a nationwide shortage of approximately 5,000 veterinarians. It is not only critical for Kentucky students pursuing veterinary medicine to have the opportunity to advance their education in their home state, but also for Kentucky farmers to access high-quality veterinary professionals.

Our commonwealth is long overdue for a veterinary school, especially one of the caliber Murray State can provide. I offer my most robust support for Murray State University's efforts and look forward to working with you to make their plan a reality. Thank you for your attention to their request, and please do not hesitate to reach out if I may be of additional support throughout this process.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Member of Congress