

HCS HB 159 -- ACTIONS AGAINST VETERINARIANS

SPONSOR: McGaugh

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 11-0.

This bill specifies that actions for damages for malpractice, negligence, error, or mistake against veterinarians and entities providing veterinary services must be brought within two years from the date of the occurrence of the act, subject to exceptions, specified in the bill. The animal owner's knowledge is used when time periods are dependent on knowledge of the negligence.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that there currently is no statute of limitations that applies to veterinary malpractice, other than a catchall statute of limitations. The veterinary community believes there should be similar standards for veterinary malpractice lawsuits as there are for medical malpractice suits. Veterinarians have malpractice insurance and have legal concerns, even though most of them are not being sued.

Testifying for the bill were Representative McGaugh; Dr. Cliff Miller, DVM; Missouri Veterinary Medical Association; and Missouri Cattlemen's Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

This bill is similar to SB 552 (2012).