

SENATE BILL 2154

By Bell

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 38, Chapter 1; Title 44, Chapter 17 and Title 63, Chapter 12, relative to veterinary technicians.

WHEREAS, over the years, states have made their own determinations, established practice acts with varied education and credentialing requirements for veterinary technicians, and spawned four different titles for essentially the same job; and

WHEREAS, uniform standards for veterinary technicians would help ease the burden on military spouses when relocating by establishing a uniform professional title that can be carried between states; and

WHEREAS, it is in the State's best interest to clarify such ambiguity and establish a uniform title, license, credentialing requirements, and scope of practice; and

WHEREAS, uniform standards for veterinary technicians could improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover in the profession; and

WHEREAS, through the standardization and public awareness of the credential, the profession will make strides toward better recognition, mobility, and elevated practice standards leading to better patient care and consumer protection; and

WHEREAS, the profession shall be united under the single title "Registered Veterinary Nurse" as it standardizes credentialing requirements and scope of practice; now, therefore, BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 63-12-103(9), is amended by deleting the subdivision in its entirety and adding the following as a new, appropriately designated subdivision:

"Registered veterinary nurse" means a person who has successfully completed the examination requirements prescribed by the board and has been issued a license;

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 63-12-103(20), is amended by deleting the subdivision in its entirety and adding the following as a new, appropriately designated subdivision:

() "Veterinary nurse":

(A) Means a person who is a graduate of a veterinary nursing or veterinary technician program accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association; and

(B) Notwithstanding subdivision () (A), does not include a person providing service to human beings as provided in chapter 7 of this title.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 63-12-104, is amended by deleting subdivision (b)(2) in its entirety and substituting instead the following as a new, appropriately designated subdivision:

One (1) registered veterinary nurse or licensed veterinary technician who is a graduate of an approved veterinary nursing program, is of good standing in the profession, and who has had not less than five (5) years' actual experience as a licensed veterinary technician or registered veterinary nurse; and

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 63-12-106, is amended by adding a new, appropriately designated subdivision:

() Promulgate rules related to the scope of practice, application process, license renewal, license fee, penalties, and other areas as the board determines necessary for licensed registered veterinary nurses. The rules must be adopted pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5;

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 63-12-135, is amended by deleting the language "licensed veterinary technicians" wherever it occurs and substituting instead

"registered veterinary nurses", and is further amended by deleting the language "licensed veterinary technician" wherever it occurs and substituting instead "registered veterinary nurse".

SECTION 6. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 63-12-138(c), is amended by deleting the language "licensed veterinary technicians" and substituting instead "registered veterinary nurses".

SECTION 7. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 63-12-141(c), is amended by deleting the language "licensed veterinary technician" and substituting instead "registered veterinary nurse".

SECTION 8. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 63-12-144(c), is amended by deleting the language "licensed veterinary technician" and substituting instead "registered veterinary nurse".

SECTION 9. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 63, Chapter 12, is amended by adding a new, appropriately designated section:

A registered veterinary nurse licensed under this chapter shall identify himself or herself as a "registered veterinary nurse" and shall not identify himself or herself using only the term "nurse". Any use of the word "nurse", separate from "registered veterinary nurse", may be grounds for disciplinary action by of the board as determined by rule.

SECTION 10. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 63, Chapter 12, is amended by adding a new, appropriately designated section:

All veterinary technicians who hold a license in this state in good standing on or before January 1, 2019, shall be deemed in compliance with the requirements of a registered veterinary nurse, and shall be granted a license as a registered veterinary nurse upon license renewal.

SECTION 11. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 38-1-403(d)(3), is amended by deleting the language "veterinary technician" and substituting instead "veterinary nurse".

SECTION 12. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 44-17-601(c), is amended by deleting the language "licensed veterinary technician" and substituting instead "registered veterinary nurse".

SECTION 13. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 63, Chapter 12, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

The board is authorized to delay revising rules promulgated under this chapter to reflect the change in terminology occasioned by this act from veterinary technician to veterinary nurse to such time as the department would review or renew the rules in the ordinary course of business. Until those changes are made, a reference in the rules to a veterinary technician is deemed to be a reference to a veterinary nurse unless the context requires otherwise.

SECTION 14. For rulemaking purposes, this act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, this act shall take effect January 1, 2019, the public welfare requiring it.