

## Update on Senate Bill 711

The House of Representatives has not yet taken action on Senate Bill 711. The adjournment date for the Illinois General Assembly continues to be pushed back and there is speculation that the legislature could remain in session at least through May. The delayed adjournment is the result of the lack of an agreed upon state budget.

Last week, the Governor's office contacted the Illinois Department of Revenue and told them to work with ISVMA to develop an amendment to Senate Bill 711 that made the provisions of the bill applicable only to the veterinary profession. We agreed to amendatory language last week and, as a result, we have been told that the Governor will support our bill.

The only unresolved question is whether the House of Representatives will call Senate Bill 711 for a vote before the adjournment date. We have been in constant contact with the legislative leaders and staff and remain hopeful.

We will continue to update members on the status of Senate Bill 711 through the E-SOURCE and/or ISVMA Action Alerts. If you would like to read a summary of the ISVMA Tax Proposal contained in Senate Bill 711 please [click here](#) (note: you will have to enter your username/password to access the ISVMA Member Center. Follow the directions in the entry form exactly).

## ISVMA Members Assist in Lobbying Efforts

The ISVMA Legislative Action Center was introduced on our new website on February 4, 2006. During the past ten weeks, 345 ISVMA members have used the Legislative Action Center to send 1292 messages (by email, fax and regular mail) to members of the Illinois General Assembly and the Governor. These messages have been a tremendous help to the ISVMA lobbyists as we continue to work for the passage of Senate Bill 711 (the ISVMA sales tax initiative).

In addition to the messages sent through the ISVMA Legislative Action Center, there have been countless phone calls and personal visits made by ISVMA members to legislators and the ISVMA conducted a small (but very successful) Lobby Day in March 2006. ISVMA has been leveraging relationships (some old and some new) between legislators and veterinarian constituents. The legislators are very grateful for the information and support they have received from ISVMA members because it has helped them make informed votes.

The 345 legislative activists have been incredibly effective! They are carrying the load, however, for an additional 1500 ISVMA member veterinarians that haven't yet participated in our grassroots lobbying effort. It is difficult to imagine how impactful 2000 veterinarians would be if they participated in our grassroots lobby effort. We have to increase the number of legislative activists to protect our Practice Act as it is likely to be reviewed in the next year or two.

It is also worth mentioning that several veterinary students at the University of Illinois have become legislative activists. I'm very excited that they are already taking pride of ownership in this great profession! I encourage the students to continue to respond to the ISVMA Legislative Action Alerts and to convince their fellow students to also participate in the ISVMA grassroots lobby effort.

## Do You Know These Legislators?

We are working to find at least one veterinarian within each legislator's district or veterinarians with relationships that would allow them to be our designated contact person for a legislator. We have, at this point, identified a contact person for 88% of the state senators and 82% of the state representatives. The following is a list of legislators that we still have not identified a veterinary contact person for:

State Senator James Clayborne (D-East St. Louis)  
State Senator Jacqueline Collins (D-Chicago)  
State Senator Rickey Hendon (D-Chicago)

State Senator James Meeks (D-Chicago)  
 State Senator Kwame Raoul (D-Chicago)  
 State Senator Martin Sandoval (D-Chicago)  
 State Senator Louis Viverito (D-Chicago)

State Representative Daniel Burke (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative Michelle Chavez (D-Cicero)  
 State Representative Annazette Collins (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative Marlow Colvin (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative Lee Daniels (R-Elmhurst)  
 State Representative William Davis (D-East Hazel Crest)  
 State Representative William Delgado (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative Mary Flowers (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative Esther Golar (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative Thomas Holbrook (D-Belleville)  
 State Representative Lovana Jones (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative Kevin Joyce (D-Worth)  
 State Representative Joseph Lyons (D-Chicago)  
 House Speaker Michael Madigan (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative Larry McKeon (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative David Miller (D-Dolton)  
 State Representative Robert Molaro (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative Milton Patterson (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative Angelo "Skip" Saviano (R-River Grove)  
 State Representative Arthur Turner (D-Chicago)  
 State Representative Eddie Washington (D-Waukegan)  
 State Representative Wyvetter Younge (D-East St. Louis)

If you know any of the legislators listed above please let us know by filling out the [ISVMA Legislative Relationship Form](#).

### **Executive Veterinary Program: Business Management**

The University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine's Executive Veterinary Program (EVP) was developed in 1991 to enhance the business, communication, and planning skills of busy animal health professionals.

An exciting, new EVP scheduled to begin in August will provide participants with knowledge and skills needed to more effectively and efficiently manage a business. The modules will approach the topics from a general business perspective, allowing for a business management education in a non-species- or industry-specific environment.

Twelve interactive, two-day (Thursday and Friday) learning sessions are scheduled over a two-year period. The module arrangements allows for insight and understanding to build and grow throughout the program. Each interactive two-day session offers 12 hours of continuing education credit. To optimize the learning environment, enrollment is limited to 42 participants.

Participants registered on or before May 1 will receive a \$250 discount. For more information about Executive Veterinary Program: Business Management, visit <http://www.EVPIllinois.org/>.

### **Minnesota Veterinarian Running for U.S. Senate**

Dr. Ford Bell is a fourth-generation Minnesotan with a history of community service and an eye on a seat in the US Senate. After receiving his DVM degree from the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine, he completed an internship and residency in internal medicine there. He also served on the faculty for 13 years and was associated with a nearby referral practice.

Dr. Bell sees public health as a huge part of veterinary medicine and believes that veterinarians are at the front line of almost all public health issues. His concern over inadequate funding of the public

health and veterinary infrastructure is one reason behind his Senate run. He feels that our country must deal with serious national security issues. Dr. Bell remarks, "We face far greater risks of terrorist tactics aimed at public health than we do terrorists in airplanes. An attack involving foot-and-mouth disease would spread quickly and be devastating."

"We have a fabulous profession but it is not well understood," Dr. Bell comments. "The public perceives the veterinary profession as either small animal or large animal and does not distinguish the range of specialties within it." Dr. Bell maintains that all veterinarians and others in the field should help promote better understanding by talking publicly about the profession to more than the obvious audiences of pet owners and farmers. For example, few people get the connection between veterinarians and the food supply, yet the sole protectors of that supply are veterinarians doing food work.

"Most citizens are unaware of the USDA's Plum Island Animal Disease Center in New York, which is now a part of the Department of Homeland Security," says Dr. Bell. It is the only US site doing research on foot-and-mouth disease and high-volume contamination of food supplies. This facility is an important national asset responsible for biocontainment needs, environmental management, biological countermeasures, and protection of food sources.

Dr. Bell supports the Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act, a bill that will be introduced this year in Congress and has the backing of the AVMA. This legislation recognizes that veterinary medicine is an integral part of the US public health system and helps address the critical need for public practice veterinarians.

Congress is now tackling a big issue in the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, which prohibits slaughter of horses for human consumption. According to Dr. Bell, "This bill has effectively stopped horse slaughter for 2006, but I am concerned that it does not provide for the care or maintenance of these older horses, and, as currently written, I feel it is not good for the veterinary profession."

Dr. Bell is ready to team up with his veterinary colleagues, Dr. Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) and Dr. John Ensign (R-Nevada), who are already in the Senate. Although he is running as a Democrat, Dr. Bell affirms that "profession trumps party." He looks forward to collaborating with both of these senators on issues that benefit the veterinary community and the general public, stating, "If we work together, we can get things done."

If you would like to speak with Dr. Bell or learn more about his campaign, please call his office at 612-874-1800, or visit his website: [www.fordbell.com](http://www.fordbell.com).

### ISVMA Annual Convention

Remember to mark your calendar for the ISVMA 124th Annual Convention on November 3-5, 2006



at the Wyndham Chicago Northwest Hotel in Itasca, IL.

Our convention continues to establish new standards of excellence. The convention planning committee has put together a program that will be blow you away! You will be amazed at the speaker lineup, the quality topics, expanded wetlabs and more. Look for more information from ISVMA in the coming weeks.

### About the Photo in This Issue...

The House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) is an abundant bird often associated closely with human habitation. Although the native western population occurs in a wide variety of habitats ranging from undisturbed desert to chaparral and open coniferous forests to cities, range expansions have been made possible by man's changes to the environment. The House Finch prefers edge habitat, and even in desert areas, these finches require a source of water, as well as structures for perching and nesting. These structures may be small conifers or buildings. During the past hundred years, western populations have expanded north into British Columbia and into central and eastern Montana, as suitable habitat was created by man. Over most of its range, House Finch abundance is closely correlated with the size of the local human population.

Eastern populations descend from the 1940 release of illegally caged birds, which were probably trapped in the Los Angeles area, by pet shop owners on Long Island, New York. The eastern population experienced exponential growth because of the species' high fecundity and the long-distance dispersal of juveniles. From Long Island, House Finches spread north into southern Ontario, south to northern Florida and the Gulf of Mexico, and west into the Great Plains, where they are now meeting the western population. Interestingly, the introduced eastern populations have developed migratory behavior that is absent in western House Finches. Birds from the Northeast and Great Lakes area now migrate south in winter.

The species was introduced on the Hawaiian Islands sometime before 1870. There, this finch is known as the papaya bird, which stems from the bird's preference for that food. Hawaiian males lack the red color of mainland birds and, at one time, were thought to be a separate species; however, their lack of red color is due to diet.

Everywhere, the House Finch is a gregarious bird, forming loose flocks in breeding season, and flocks that may number into the hundreds in the winter. They roost in close proximity to each other, sometimes touching. These vegetarian birds are strongly attracted to feeders, where they prefer small sunflower seeds. At other times of the year they feed on buds, seeds, and fruits—they feed on so much fruit that in parts of the West, they may be considered pests.

**Cool fact:** Male House Finches display extreme color variation, ranging from pale yellow to bright red. The depth of red coloring in each male depends on the amount of carotenoid pigments in the bird's food sources during the molting period. Studies show that females prefer the brightest and reddest males; presumably the hue and intensity of color are indications of the male's fitness.

I photographed this male House Finch at Madera Canyon, Arizona in January 2006.

### Contact Us

Please feel free to forward this issue of the E-SOURCE to veterinarians that are not receiving ISVMA's electronic newsletter. Any ISVMA member may subscribe to the E-SOURCE for free:

If you wish to add your name to the recipient list, send an e-mail to [info@isvma.org](mailto:info@isvma.org) and ask to receive the E-SOURCE newsletter.

ISVMA values your membership and does not want to send you any unwanted email. If you would like to be removed from this member service, please email [info@isvma.org](mailto:info@isvma.org).