

Veterinary Student Loan Repayment Program Act Passes House Committee

Jessica Hendrickson, a first year student at the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Illinois, testified before the House Higher Education Committee on February 19, 2009 in support of House Bill 394. Appearing at the witness table with the bill's sponsor, Illinois State Representative David Reis, Jessica spoke to the committee about how this important legislation addresses a serious issue in Illinois and throughout the United States. It would provide loan forgiveness for veterinary students that enter into an agreement to serve in critical need areas such as food supply veterinary medicine or public health medicine.

The bill passed the House committee on a 7-0-0 vote and was sent to the full House of Representatives for consideration. The bill was also placed on the order of Short Debate which is reserved for bills that are discharged from committee without reservation. Once a bill passes in the House of Representatives, it must be heard in a Senate committee and voted upon by the full Senate before being sent to the Governor for final approval.

Jessica is a student member of ISVMA and hopes to practice swine production medicine upon graduation. She is pictured (above) during the hearing with State Representative David Reis.



Update on Legislative Issues

ISVMA is working on a number of legislative issues. Some of the activity on bills doesn't show up on the "official" bill status that you can find on the [Illinois General Assembly website](#). ISVMA lobbyists are working "behind the scenes" on a number of issues and bills in an effort to develop agreed amendments that satisfy our concerns and affirm our long-standing position as the expert advocates on issues related to the health and safety of animals.

We encourage you to frequently check the [ISVMA Legislative Action Center](#) for new alerts and updates on the [bills we are tracking](#). ISVMA will send Action Alerts when your support is needed to help us communicate our position on legislation to your legislators.

Thank you for your support and participation!

Illinois Veterinarian Offers Advice on Selecting a Horse

The American Veterinary Medical Association has a link to a [podcast](#) on their homepage in which Dr. Lydia Gray, an equine veterinarian from Elburn, Ill., and President Elect of the ISVMA, talks about horses and offers advice on how to determine if a horse is right for you.

Register Now for the ISVMA Spring Seminar Series

ISVMA is excited to announce the 2009 Spring Seminar Series! This is the first license renewal cycle in which veterinarians must obtain 40 hours of CE and veterinary technicians must obtain 15 hours. Therefore, we have expanded our program and we are offering concurrent sessions for veterinary practice owners/managers and veterinary technicians/assistants.

Full program information (including course descriptions, speaker bios, directions and schedule) is available on the [ISVMA website](#).

[Registration is open](#) and limited for each venue. Please register early!

The practice owner/manager program is called, "Hard Times Management: Improving Your Hospital in a Recessionary Time." The presenters include Christine A. Merle, DVM, CPA, CVPM; Judy Jennings, MBA; and a representative from a top accounting firm.

The veterinary technician/assistant program will be presented by Mr. Angel Rivera CVT, VTS (ECC). He will speak on a number of topics including: Veterinary Nursing: Ethics and Professionalism; 20 essential tools of monitoring, diagnostics and assessments to use in the critically ill ICU patient; Basic Patient Parameter Assessment (Triage); and How to become an indispensable part of a winning team and increase practice profitability through the appropriate use of staff.

The 2009 ISVMA Spring Seminars will be offered at three locations:

- March 14 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Springfield, IL
- March 21 at the Stonegate in Hoffman Estates, IL **no technician program at this location*
- March 22 at the Holiday Inn in Willowbrook, IL

The ISVMA Spring Seminar Series programs will run from 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. and qualify for 6 hours of continuing education credit.

The ISVMA wishes to thank the sponsors of the 2009 ISVMA Spring Seminar Series:



About the Photo

Is that Woody Woodpecker? Perhaps it is the famed Ivory-billed Woodpecker, sometimes called the "Lord God Bird", because when people saw it they would exclaim, "[Lord God! What a Bird!](#)". The bird in the photograph is actually a [Pileated Woodpecker](#) (*Dryocopus pileatus*) and is perhaps the largest woodpecker species in North America. The only North American birds of similar plumage and size are the Ivory-billed Woodpecker of the Southeastern United States and Cuba, and the related Imperial Woodpecker of Mexico. Both of those species are extremely rare, if not extinct.

The Pileated Woodpecker was the model for the cartoon character Woody Woodpecker. Adults are the size of crows (16-19 inches with a wingspan of 26-30 inches) and are mainly black with a red crest and a white line down the sides of the throat. Adult males have a red line from the bill to the throat and red on the front of the crown. In adult females, these are black. Both genders show white on the wings in flight.

Their call is a wild laugh, similar to the Northern Flicker. Its drumming can be very loud, often sounding like someone striking a tree with a hammer, and can be heard over very long distances. This bird favors mature forests, but has adapted to use second-growth stands and heavily wooded parks as well. They make such large holes in dead trees that sometimes the holes can cause a small tree to break in half.

Pileated Woodpeckers mainly eat insects (especially beetle larvae and carpenter ants) as well as fruits, berries and nuts. They often chip out large and roughly rectangular holes in trees while searching out insects.

Their breeding habitat is forested areas with large trees across Canada, the eastern United States and parts of the Pacific coast. They usually excavate large nests in the cavities of dead trees, and often excavate a new home each year, creating habitat for other large cavity nesters. A Pileated Woodpecker pair stays together on its territory all year round. It will defend the territory in all seasons, but will tolerate floaters during the winter.

I photographed this male Pileated Woodpecker on a suet feeder in Columbus, OH in 1999.

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