



April 2, 2021

The Honorable Dan Dockstader
Senate President, Wyoming State Legislature
State Capitol
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

RE: Veto of SF0093/SEA No. 19 WICHE repayment program-veterinary medicine students

Dear President Dockstader,

I appreciate the efforts of the legislature to place all medical students, including veterinary students, on similar footing with regard to service requirements under the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) program. Wyoming is currently the only state that does not require veterinary students to return and serve in our state. Historically, this has been due to a number of factors, including debt to income ratio of veterinary medicine students and the number of available jobs. The intent of SF0093/SEA No. 19 seeks to correct that discrepancy, but it does so without accommodation for those students who currently plan to enroll in the Veterinary Program. Because of this flaw, I am vetoing SF0093/SEA No. 19.

I support the policy laid out in the bill and generally find the bill to be appropriate. However, after carefully weighing the immediate way this bill would be implemented, I find the impacts would fall arbitrarily and somewhat capriciously on one class of graduating students who have spent the past four years readying themselves for a fall semester in veterinary school. I cannot imagine that the Legislature would want to inadvertently and detrimentally impact students without at least offering some sort of reasonable transitional approach or way to "grandfather" this current class of potential veterinary students.

During the session, numerous organizations cautioned the legislature on outcomes of this legislation and my staff attempted to work with legislators to amend the bill and fix concerns with the dates provided. Unfortunately, these amendments were not made and due to the immediate nature of the bill's effective date, there is no work-around for those students.

I would like the legislature to bring this bill back at its next session after having considered a way to ease the burden on students whose course work has been predicated on taking a veterinary track at UW while clearly outlining the changed circumstances of the modified

WICHE requirements. This will provide remaining students adequate time to weigh their options and understand the changes that will be imposed.

Again, I support the concept of the bill and the policy but cannot support impacting current students in this way.

Sincerely,



Mark Gordon
Governor

cc: The Honorable Eric Barlow, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Ed Buchanan, Secretary of State
Chief Clerk, Wyoming House of Representatives
Chief Clerk, Wyoming Senate