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Arkansas Legislature Briefly

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Arkansas News Bureau |

Measure On Equine Care Advances

LITTLE ROCK — A House committee on Wednesday endorsed a bill that would impose a temporary moratorium on sanctions against non-veterinarians who perform dentistry or massage on horses.



House Bill 1763 by Rep. Charlie Collins, R-Fayetteville, would — with an amendment presented Wednesday — prohibit the Veterinary Medical Examining Board from investigating or prosecuting a practitioner of horse dentistry or horse massage for two years, to allow time for the issue to be studied before the next regular legislative session. Under the bill, a person with letters of recommendation from at least two previous clients could be considered a practitioner.

The bill also would exempt horseshoeing, training, nonsurgical artificial insemination and the selling of medicines for horses from the Arkansas Veterinary Medical Practice Act. The House Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development endorsed the bill in a voice vote. The bill goes to the House.

Earlier in the same meeting, the committee rejected HB 1712 by Rep. Garry Smith, D-Camden, which would exempt certain practices performed on horses from the Veterinary Medical Practice Act immediately.

Committee Approves Small Loans Bill

LITTLE ROCK — A bill to allow companies to offer small loans in Arkansas cleared a House committee Wednesday, despite opposition

from the attorney general's office.

House Bill 1846 by Rep. Jon Woods, R-Springdale, received a "do pass" recommendation from the House Insurance and Commerce Committee and advances to the House. The bill would set regulations for businesses offering loans of less than \$5,000.

Woods said the bill would not allow companies to charge interest rates or fees exceeding the state's maximum interest rate of 17 percent. He said it would not open the door to the return to Arkansas of payday lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates and fees.

Woods also is the sponsor of HB 1572, which would allow the Legislature to raise the maximum interest rate on small loans. Sen. Michael Lamoureux, R-Russellville, has filed a mirror bill in the Senate.

Attorney General Dustin McDaniel opposes all three bills.

Ban On Day-Care Jobs For Sex Offenders OK'd

LITTLE ROCK — A bill that would prohibit Level 3 and Level 4 sex offenders from working at day-care centers when children are present cleared a House committee Wednesday.

House Bill 1415 by Rep. Henry "Hank" Wilkins IV, D-Pine Bluff, is a response to a case in which the state Court of Appeals ruled that a Level 4 sex offender did not violate state law by working as a carpenter at a day-care center in Pine Bluff because his job did not require direct interaction with children.

The bill passed in a voice vote with no "no" votes heard. It goes to the House.