
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Senator Dr. Aisha Wahab, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1733	Hearing Date:	June 1, 2026
Author:	Lee		
Version:	February 5, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Elissa Silva		

Subject: License and registration renewal: continuing education

SUMMARY: Allows for both the hours of self-study and up to a specified number of hours of pro bono spay or neuter services to be credited toward the required hours of continuing education (CE), as specified, for veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians (RVTs) seeking licensure renewal.

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) under the jurisdiction of the Department of Consumer Affairs to license and regulate veterinarians, registered veterinary technicians (RVTs), veterinary assistant controlled substance permit holders, and registered veterinary premises. (Business and Professions Code (BPC) § 4800 *et. seq*)
- 2) Prohibits any person from practicing veterinary medicine unless they hold a valid, unexpired, and unrevoked license. (BPC § 4825)
- 3) States that a person practices veterinary medicine, surgery, and dentistry when they do any one of the following:
 - a) Represents oneself as engaged in the practice of veterinary medicine, veterinary surgery, or veterinary dentistry in any of its branches.
 - b) Diagnoses or prescribes a drug, medicine, appliance, application, or treatment of whatever nature for the prevention, cure, or relief of a wound, fracture, bodily injury, or disease of animals.
 - c) Administers a drug, medicine, appliance, application, or treatment of whatever nature for the prevention, cure, or relief of a wound, fracture, bodily injury, or disease of animals, as specified.
 - d) Performs a surgical or dental operation upon an animal.
 - e) Performs a tendonectomy, onychectomy, or any type of claw removal on a feline.
 - f) Performs any manual procedure for the diagnosis of pregnancy, sterility, or infertility upon livestock or Equidae.

- g) Collects blood from an animal for the purpose of transferring or selling that blood and blood component products to a licensed veterinarian at a registered premises, as specified
 - h) Uses any words, letters, or titles in such connection or under such circumstances as to induce the belief that the person using them is engaged in the practice of veterinary medicine, veterinary surgery, or veterinary dentistry, as specified. (BPC § 4826)
- 4) Requires among other things, that an applicant to practice veterinary medicine graduate from a veterinary college recognized by the VMB, or receive a certificate from the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) or the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE). (BPC § 4846(a)(1))
 - 5) Clarifies that, if the veterinary college from which an applicant is graduated is not recognized by the VMB, the VMB has authority to determine the qualifications of such graduates and to review the quality of the educational experience attained by them in an unrecognized veterinary college. (BPC § 4846.1)
 - 6) Requires all veterinarians and RVTs, except for the first renewal period, to obtain CE relevant to developments in the practice of veterinary medicine. (BPC § 4858(a))
 - 7) Requires a person applying for licensure renewal to certify under penalty of perjury that they are in compliance with the required CE. (BPC § 4858(b))
 - 8) Requires that, with limited exceptions, the VMB issue renewal licenses to veterinarians who have completed a minimum of 36 hours of CE in the preceding two years. (BPC § 4858.1)
 - 9) Authorizes six of the required 36 hours of CE may be earned by doing either, or a combination of, the following:
 - a) Up to six hours taking self-study courses, which may include, but are not limited to, reading journals, viewing video recordings, or listening to audio recordings; or
 - b) Up to four hours providing pro bono spaying or neutering services for a public animal control agency or shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals shelter, humane society shelter, or rescue group, as specified. (BPC § 4858.1)
 - 10) Requires an applicant for registration as a RVT to satisfy the following:
 - a) Complete an application and pay the fee;
 - b) Submit a full set of fingerprints for criminal history record check;

- c) Furnish satisfactory evidence of completion of specified education, or education and experience, and pass the national examination. (BPC § 4841.5)
- 11) Authorizes RVTs and veterinary assistants to perform animal healthcare services not prohibited by law, under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian. (BPC §4840)
- 12) Requires the VMB to issue a renewed RVT certification only to those applicants who have completed a minimum of 20 hours of CE in the preceding two years. (BPC 4858.2(a))
- 13) Allows up to four hours of the required 20 hours for RVTs to be earned by doing either of the following, or a combination thereof:
 - a) Up to four hours may be earned by taking self-study courses, which may include, but are not limited to, reading journals, viewing video recordings, or listening to audio recordings;
 - b) Up to two hours may be earned by performing pro bono animal health care tasks related to spaying and neutering services, as specified. (BPC § 4858.2(b)(2)(A)(B))

This bill:

- 1) Revises the CE requirements for a licensed veterinarian and an RVT as follows:
 - a) Allow a total of six hours of the required 36 hours of CE for a licensed veterinarian to be earned by taking self-study courses.
 - b) Allow up to a total of four hours of the required 36 hours of CE for a licensed veterinarian to be earned by providing spay or neuter services at no cost.
 - c) Allow a total of up to four hours of the required 20 hours of CE for an RVT to be earned by taking self-study courses.
 - d) Allow a total of up to two hours of the required 20 hours of CE for a RVT to be earned providing animal health care tasks related to spay or neuter services at no cost.
- 2) Makes the following findings and declarations:
 - a) Doctors of veterinary medicine continue to innovate to address the pet overpopulation crisis.
 - b) Animals shelters in California support funding to advance education in high-quality, high-volume spay and neuter services to address the pet overpopulation crisis. Animal shelters further support veterinarians who receive continuing education credit for their time spent volunteering to provide spay and neuter services in California's animal shelters.
- 3) Makes other technical changes.

FISCAL EFFECT: This bill is keyed fiscal. According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, VMB anticipates minor and absorbable costs, primarily related to educating licensees through updates to the VMB website, and outreach.

COMMENTS:

1. **Purpose.** The California Animal Welfare Association is the sponsor of this bill. According to the Author, “AB 1733 supports animals, shelters, and the veterinarians who serve them by modernizing continuing education requirements. By valuing volunteer service, this bill supports more veterinarians in partnering with shelters and rescues organizations, helping to expand access to lifesaving spay and neuter. AB 1733 strengthens animal welfare outcomes while supporting the professionals who generously donate their time to protect animal health and prevent overpopulation.”

2. **Background.**

Veterinarians, Registered Veterinary Technicians, and the Veterinary Medical Board. The VMB is responsible for the licensure and regulation of veterinarians and RVTs in California. To obtain a license to practice veterinary medicine an individual must meet specified educational requirements and pass a national examination. An RVT must be registered with the VMB to provide the designated animal health care tasks. There are multiple pathways to become an RVT in California. All applicants must take and pass the National Veterinary Technician National Exam offered by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards and graduate from a VMB-approved program or obtain education equivalency certified by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalency for veterinary technicians.

To renew a veterinarian license or an RVT certification, current law requires a licensed veterinarian to complete 36 hours of CE every two years and a RVT to complete 20 hours of CE every two years.

To reach the required CE hours, veterinarians and RVTs are permitted to accumulate the hours through a variety of pathways. For example, veterinarians may attend approved courses relevant to veterinary medicine including courses by American Veterinary Medical Association accredited colleges and associations, government agencies, certain nonprofit conferences, and more. RVTs can attend courses sponsored or co-sponsored by the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America recognized veterinary technician specialty organizations, or state veterinary technician associations recognized by the secretary of state in that state.

Additionally, veterinarians may earn up to four hours of the required 36 hours of CE by providing no cost spaying and neutering services “under the supervision of a public animal control agency or shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals shelter, humane society shelter, or rescue group.”, and can earn six hours by completing self-study courses including “reading journals, viewing video recordings, or listening to audio recordings.” RVTs can earn up to four hours of the

required CE by taking self-study courses and earn up to two hours of the required CE by performing animal healthcare tasks related to spaying and neutering services at no cost to a public animal control agency or shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals shelter, humane society shelter, or rescue group.

However, current law limits veterinarians and RVTs to only credit a limited number of CE hours toward either self-study or the no cost spay and neuter services, or a combination of the two. In other words, if a veterinarian completed 4 hours of no cost spay and neuter services, they can only credit two hours of self-study toward their CE. Or if a veterinarian already completed six hours of self-study, they are unable to earn CE hours performing no cost spay and neuter services. The author and sponsors argue that the current structure disincentivizes veterinarians and RVTs from providing no cost spay and neuter services to obtain CE. The goal of this bill is to allow the full accumulation of self-study hours to be counted towards CE, while allowing veterinarians and RVTs to accumulate the additional four and two hours respectively of CE for performing services related to spay and neuter for no costs to a public animal control agency or shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals shelter, humane society shelter, or rescue group.

Pet Overpopulation. AB 2300 (Maienschein, Chapter 236, Statutes of 2018), authorized veterinarians and RVTs to accumulate hours for CE credit to support no cost spay and neuter services. The impetus of that bill was to encourage veterinarians to provide free spay and neuter services to help address the pet overpopulation and assist shelters and other non-profit rescue groups to provide these services at low or no cost helping to support communities who may not have access or resources to traditional spay and neuter services and help with the demand at shelters and other rescues as dogs and cats must be spayed or neutered prior to adoption.

3. **Related Legislation.** AB 1502 (Berman, Chapter 195, Statutes of 2025) among numerous other provisions revises and recasts CE requirements under a new article in the veterinary practice act.

SB 361 (Hill, Chapter 764, Statutes of 2015) requires a licensed veterinarian to complete a minimum of one credit hour of continuing education on the judicious use of medically important antimicrobial drugs every four years as part of his or her continuing education requirements, and made minor, conforming changes related to the required antimicrobial stewardship policies of skilled nursing facilities.

4. **Arguments in Support.** The California Animal Welfare Association writes in support, “By clarifying that volunteer spay and neuter services may be used to satisfy continuing education requirements, AB 1733 creates a meaningful incentive for veterinarians and veterinary technicians to provide critical services to underserved communities and overburdened shelters. This policy change not only supports the veterinary workforce but also directly advances California’s broader animal welfare goals.”

The California Veterinary Medical Association writes in support, “AB 1733 will move the pro-bono spay/neuter CE credit out of the “self-study” category into its own category. While the CE will not be considered “live-interactive,” it will be classified

next to another existing CE option that permits veterinarians and RVTs who attend Veterinary Medical Board meetings to earn CE credit.

“The intention of this move is to better incentivize veterinarians and RVTs to volunteer at shelters. Shelters are in need of veterinary support, and California consumers are in need of low-cost spay/neuter services in order to curb California’s epic pet overpopulation problem.”

SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION:

Support:

California Animal Welfare Association (sponsor)
California Veterinary Medical Association

Opposition:

None received

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