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[Keep Our Pets Safe](#)

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**Denver Dumb Friends League Veterinarian Joins KOPS Press Conference in Final Effort To Warn of Dangers of Prop 129**

Denver, CO – With just one week to go before Election Day, a current Denver Dumb Friends League (DDFL) veterinarian joined a coalition of Colorado veterinary leaders, including State Representative Dr. Karen McCormick, DVM and Colorado veterinarians Dr. Jennifer Bolser, and Dr. Will French, in voicing strong opposition to Proposition 129, a ballot initiative that would put animal welfare at risk by subjecting pets to substandard care.

Speaking out publicly for the first time on Tuesday, Dr. Allison Black, a veterinarian at the Denver Dumb Friends League, said she has long raised concerns with the Denver Dumb Friends League about their dangerous proposal, only to be rebuffed:

**“Since joining DFL three years ago, I’ve been involved in multiple conversations about this proposal. From the beginning, staff veterinarians, including myself, were asked to provide professional input, but it is clear our serious concerns were never truly heard. Initial meetings were open to feedback, yet when objections and questions were raised, they were quickly rejected, and the discussions went nowhere. Subsequent meetings yielded no progress either. Nonetheless, without regard to our concerns and staunch opposition, DFL pushed ahead with this proposal, conveying a clear message,”** Dr. Black said.

**“This is happening, so get on board.’ It is not just the creation of this position that alarms me. It’s the complete disregard for the risks this proposition poses if passed. As somebody who performs surgical procedures on animal patients and has undergone years of training and education to do so ... I know what is at stake, no surgery is zero risk. Under the current ambiguous language of Prop 129, VPAs would be performing surgeries they aren’t properly trained for. That’s a gamble we cannot afford to take with Colorado’s pets.”**

State Rep. Karen McCormick DVM of Boulder, a veterinarian and small business owner, emphasized gaps in VPA training, liability, and safety:

**“The [VPA] training, as proposed, is inadequate to include this person to be able to practice veterinary medicine, including surgery,’** said. Rep. McCormick. **“A VPA is not**

**equivalent to a human PA, and it won't help animals, and it won't help our veterinary teams. This is a dangerous proposal and it won't relieve our burdens."**

Dr. Jennifer Bolser DVM, cVMA, the Chief Clinic Veterinarian at the Humane Society of Boulder Valley, argued that Proposition 129 fails to address key access and cost concerns:

**"Shelter veterinarians are expressing deep concerns about Prop. 129, which is being championed by a few organizational heads. Proponents are saying that a small group of dissenting veterinarians are trying to veto all others who support this initiative. This is a fabrication. Let's be very clear: the group of veterinary professionals expressing concerns and oppositions to Prop 129 is not small. It is the vast majority of the practicing veterinarians and technicians, including those working in shelters and access-to-care programs. We are opposed to Proposition 129 because it is not good for animals."**

Dr. Will French, an equine veterinarian, CSU alumni and fifth generation Colorado native, warned of insufficient hands-on training in the proposed VPA program:

**"This VPA has been compared to a physician's assistant or a nurse practitioner, and that comparison is very misleading. The education that is proposed for a VPA is nowhere near the clinical number of hours that a physician's assistant receives. This proposed program would only be three semesters of online training, followed by one semester in the clinics and a final semester of internship. So again, the clinical hours that these graduates would receive is nowhere near that of a physician's assistant and certainly nowhere near close enough to provide safe care to animals and especially safe surgery."**

Instead of Prop. 129's dangerous ideas, the veterinarians highlighted other productive efforts to increase veterinary access at the state legislature, including efforts to increase telehealth options, class sizes at veterinary schools, and broaden responsibilities for registered veterinary technicians. These collaborative approaches, Rep. McCormick and others argued, address the root issues in veterinary care without compromising pet safety or professional standards.

Watch the [full press conference here](#).

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**Transcript of DDFL Veterinarian Dr. Allison Black's remarks:**

**Dr. Allison Black:** My name is Allison Black, and I'm a staff veterinarian at the Dumb Friends League currently. Prior to that, I was at a municipal shelter in Central Texas for a few years. I'm highly concerned about Proposition 129 as well if it were to pass. My concern is deeply personal, as I know who has pushed this proposition onto the ballot, my own employer the Dumb Friends League. I don't come forward lightly, but I cannot stand by and let Colorado voters be misled by this irresponsible ballot measure. The Dumb Friends' leadership has been

advocating for this position for years, with no success working with the state's elected officials and the legislature. They have now forced the VPA concept onto the ballot for Colorado's 2024 general election, in the form of Prop 129., ignoring the concerns of veterinarian professionals who work directly with animals.

[...]

Since joining DFL three years ago, I've been involved in multiple conversations about this proposal. From the beginning, staff veterinarians, including myself, were asked to provide professional input, but it is clear our serious concerns were never truly heard. Initial meetings were open to feedback, yet when objections and questions were raised, they were quickly rejected, and the discussions went nowhere. Subsequent meetings yielded no progress either. Nonetheless, without regard to our concerns and staunch opposition, DFL pushed ahead with this proposal, conveying a clear message.

'This is happening, so get on board.' It is not just the creation of this position that alarms me. It's the complete disregard for the risks this proposition poses if passed. As somebody who performs surgical procedures on animal patients and has undergone years of training and education to do so, as Dr. Bolser said, I know what is at stake, no surgery is zero risk. Under the current ambiguous language of Prop 129, VPAs would be performing surgeries they aren't properly trained for. That's a gamble we cannot afford to take with Colorado's pets.

A common argument in favor of this position is the comparison to a PA position or physician assistant position in human health care, but this is not an equivalent comparison. In fact, PAs are not legally allowed to perform independent surgeries as the human health care field acknowledges that surgery should be performed by qualified doctors with appropriate training. PAs assist doctors in surgery just as current registered vet techs are trained to assist veterinarians in surgery.

I hope that by coming forward and pulling back the curtain on the dangerous measure and the proponents behind it, voters will see Proposition 129 for what it truly is, a threat to quality veterinary care for pets and animals in Colorado. I urge my fellow veterinarians who have been intimidated into silence to join me in speaking out. The lives of the animals we care and all Colorado animals depend on it [...].

"I'll tell you what, I have been speaking out about this since the very beginning. I have been the most vocal veterinarian or anybody at the Dumb Friends League, for the past two years against this, I've shown up to every meeting organized to get together to discuss this with our CEO, hoping that at the ground level I would be able to make a difference from the beginning. But like I said earlier, it didn't really matter.

I have been working with organizations to combat it from the sides and stuff, but kind of just feeling a little bit not able to express myself in the beginning; that my opinion maybe doesn't

matter as much, or like I said, this is happening anyway. But I've been doing what I can at the risk of some retaliation, or lack of a better word, while trying to stay safe in my current position.

So yeah, I've been doing what I can with the position that I have.”

**Read more about the dangers of Prop. 129 here:**

*The Longmont Times-Call* - [Karen McCormick: Colorado Proposition 129 will not help animals](#), by Dr. Karen McCormick

*Boulder Daily Camera* – [Guest opinion: Erin Henninger and Jennifer Bolser: Veterinary technicians and veterinarians oppose Proposition 129](#), by Dr. Jennifer Bolser and Erin Henninger.

*The Durango Herald* - [This November, our pets depend on us to reject Proposition 129](#), by Dr. Will French

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**About Keep Our Pets Safe**

Keep Our Pets Safe is dedicated to protecting pet care and health by opposing dangerous measures that prioritize profits over quality care. We work to ensure that veterinary services remain in the hands of fully trained professionals, safeguarding the well-being of pets across Colorado. For more information, visit [keepourpetssafe.com](http://keepourpetssafe.com).