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The American College of Veterinary Behaviorists (ACVB) is dedicated to acting as a catalyst to create and maintain an inclusive community of science-based experts in veterinary behavioral medicine and act as leaders in animal welfare and preservation of the human-animal bond, to benefit people and their pets.

Central to this mission is our acknowledgment of the crucial role played by the animal training community. The ACVB recognizes that trainers are vitally important in improving pet welfare and strengthening the human-animal bond. Our endorsement of current, evidence-based, humane animal training techniques that do not cause pain, discomfort, fear or anxiety, is rooted in a firm commitment to the science and welfare of animal learning.

However, the pet-owner facing animal training profession remains largely unregulated. This lack of regulation — absent licensing, mandatory education, or certification requirements — poses severe risks. Untrained or improperly trained professionals can misapply techniques through a lack of understanding of learning theory or application of aversive techniques that can inflict lasting physical and emotional damage on pets. Such practices not only harm animals but also erode the cherished human-animal bond and undermine public trust in the training profession.

In light of these concerns, the ACVB strongly advocates for the regulation of the pet training industry. We propose industry standards that include:

1. Education and Certification: Implementing mandatory education requirements and a certification process for all animal training professionals.
2. Commitment to Science-Based Techniques: Ensuring that all training methods are rooted in scientifically validated humane approaches, emphasizing the use of positive reinforcement and ensuring the well-being of the animal.
3. Consumer Protection and Public Safety: Establishing regulations to protect pet owners and the general public from unqualified animal training professionals, thereby enhancing overall public safety.

The benefits of such regulation are many: safeguarding consumer rights, ensuring professional responsibility, and most importantly, improving the lives of pets and their people. By setting and upholding these standards, we can ensure that the animal training profession is both ethical and effective.
We urge all stakeholders — from pet owners to policymakers — to join us in advocating for these essential regulations. Together, we can create a future where animal training is not only about obedience but about nurturing a safe, respectful, and loving bond between humans and their animal companions.

Sincerely,

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