

Press Release

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For immediate release:

President Obama legalizes Horse Slaughter and requires taxpayers to subsidize a foreign horse meat industry.

Equine welfare organizations denounce the actions of three legislators (rep. Jack Kingston (R-GA), sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO) and sen. Herb Kohl(D-WI), who behind closed doors stripped the Agriculture Appropriations bill from language that prevented equine slaughter for human consumption in America, thereby legalizing the practice once again. President Obama signed the bill into law on November 17th 2011.

For the first time since 2006, and in the midst of the worst recession since the Great Depression, Americans are required to subsidize a foreign owned industry that exports horsemeat served as a delicacy in fine restaurants in some European and other countries.

Americans don't consume horsemeat. Polls have consistently revealed over 70% of Americans oppose horse slaughter. "It is outrageous," says Vicki Tobin, vice president of Illinois-based Equine Welfare Alliance, "that American taxpayers would be required to subsidize foreign owned businesses that Americans oppose and that produces meat from animals that are not raised for food".

Simone Netherlands, founder of Respect4Horses, added, "In this time when the focus of Congress is supposedly on reducing spending and creating jobs it is a ludicrous measure to spend tax dollars in order to reinstate an inherently cruel predatory business, from which Americans stand to gain nothing. Horse slaughter plants operating until 2007 have never created a total of more than 178 jobs."

And, they are not good jobs, according to Paula Bacon, former mayor of Kaufman, Texas where a horse slaughter facility operated for years. "Horse slaughter means very few, very low wage jobs. This so called business brought in virtually no tax revenues and local governments incurred substantial enforcement costs in trying to regulate environmental problems with these facilities. The standard of living dropped during the time horse slaughter facilities operated. Having a horse slaughter facility drove away good businesses."

Equine slaughter has also been found to increase and abet horse theft in areas where facilities are located or horses are held for transport to slaughter.

In addition, American horses are not raised, fed and medicated within the FDA and European Union guidelines established for food animals, making them unfit and unsafe for human consumption. Equines are given many drugs banned in food animals such as pain killers, steroids, de-wormers and ointments throughout their lives.

A 2010 study in the Food and Chemical Toxicology Journal showed a drug given routinely to equines like aspirin, phenylbutazone or Bute, is a carcinogen and can cause aplastic anemia in humans. The FDA bans bute in all food producing animals because of this serious danger to human health. The recent EU FVO reports on U.S. equines exported to Canada and Mexico for slaughter show banned drug residues and falsified drug affidavits.

http://www.equinewelfarealliance.org/Horse_Slaughter.html)

The unsubstantiated claims of pro horse slaughter legislators such as Representative Jack Kingston (Georgia) are that it will solve neglect and abandonment. All we have to do is look at Canada to confirm that this is not so. They have had the same increases in neglect cases as we have here in the US and they have four operating horse slaughter plants. The demographic of people who hang on to their horses in spite of their inability to care for them, is the kind of demographic that does not want to send their horses to slaughter, therefore horse slaughter is not a solution for that demographic. One could argue that horse slaughter in fact makes people afraid to sell their horses to anyone for fear of them ending up in the slaughter pipeline and therefore increases neglect and abandonment. Even Kentucky Derby winners such as Ferdinand have ended up on someone's dinner plate in a foreign country.

In fact, it creates the problems it claims to solve says R.T. Fitch, founder of Wild Horse Freedom Federation "As a convenient and lucrative means of disposal, Horse slaughter has created an over-population problem of horses, by enabling irresponsible breeding, and encouraging a quick turn around and dumping of horses. Very much like the housing market and the banking industry, the horse breeding industry is self destructing by saturating the market and horse slaughter is the bail out".

Horse Welfare Organizations also wonder why breed associations continue to reward millions of dollars in breed incentives each year, while refusing to use some of that money as funds for horse rescues, funds for gelding, and funds for humane euthanasia.

Equine Slaughter is a grave risk to public health, is inherently inhumane and causes the very problems it claims to solve. This is once again a sign that big agricultural interests have a firm hold of congress and even the president against the will of the American people.

Currently there is a bill in the House - HR 2966- and in the Senate -S1176- that would prohibit the export of horses for human consumption and effectively end this brutal practice all together.

These equine welfare groups ask Congress to take immediate action and pass the horse slaughter prevention act of 2011. (S 1176 and HR 2966)

Equine Welfare Alliance (EWA)
Respect4Horses (R4H)
Animal Law Coalition (ALC)
Wild Horse Freedom Federation (WHFF)
The Cloud Foundation (TCF)
Animal Recovery Mission (ARM)
Americans Against Horse Slaughter (AAHS)
The Celebrate the Horse Network (CTHN)
Animals' Angels (AA)

