

# Equine Welfare Alliance

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Congress Must Act Now**

CHICAGO, (EWA) - A vote in the Montana House Thursday on a Draconian horse killing bill demands immediate action by the Congress. The Equine Welfare Alliance urges immediate passage of the Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act of 2009.

State legislation that has been introduced and passed in Montana and elsewhere to build horse slaughterhouses on US soil are in direct violation of federal law. Illinois, in particular, is attempting to completely remove veterinarian inspections. This is a clear message stating that the US does not care what drugs the horses have ingested, what diseases they carry and more importantly, what the consequences will be to the consumers of the horse meat.

In Montana, the bill was written to prohibit citizens from bringing suit against the building of a plant based on environmental issues unless a fee is paid equaling 20% of the construction cost. This is a violation of the constitutional rights of every American citizen to have access to the courts in a fair, equitable and above all, affordable arena.

Congress can no longer ignore that the basis of the campaign unleashed by pro horse slaughter supporters and organizations is fraught with lies and scare tactics. Organizations and individuals promoting horse slaughter have not provided one piece of solid evidence that justifies or supports the need for horse slaughter. Their constant media blitzes consist of false articles portraying a tsunami of abandoned horses and dismissal of irrefutable evidence provided by Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The documentation of unspeakable abuse and cruelty extracted reluctantly from the United States Department of Agriculture proves the need to forever prohibit killing horses for human consumption in foreign markets.

The media campaign is misleading at best, and downright dishonest, at worst. The spin includes calling horse slaughter processing, harvesting, humane euthanasia and recycling, in an attempt to transform the reality into something more palatable. These words belie the reality that living creatures are strung upside down, as their throats are cut for a slow death, while hooves are sawed off from their bodies. The horse is still living and often conscious during this “humane” process.

Anti slaughter advocates are accused of being employed by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) or being city “folk” that don’t understand the horse industry. Nowhere does the reader see one fact or any type of data to support the claims.

Increasingly, supporters of horse slaughter squawk that anti-slaughter advocates are vegans determined to end animal agriculture in the United States. Noting could be further from the truth.

Horses, mules, and other equines built the Capital building in Washington where their fate will be debated. These beasts of burden carried lumber, brick and mortar, to build the White House where we implore President Obama to sign the act.

The American Veterinarian Association (AVMA) and the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) classifies horses as companion animals, not livestock. Law enforcement rides service animals, hardly food stock animals. Livestock do not participate in the Triple Crown. Livestock are not used in therapy to help returning soldiers with head injuries, regain their balance. Livestock do not participate in presidential and military funerals. Every function horses perform in our society is that of a service animal.

It is time for Congress to take a stand and say enough is enough. Equines should be recognized as service animals and Congress must enact HR 503 immediately to end the cruelty and abuse American horses endure to satisfy European diners. It is time for Congress to remove the reward for irresponsible breeding and the owners that do not take responsibility for equines they chose to own or breed.

We urge caring Americans to pester your Legislators relentlessly until they pass and President Obama signs legislation putting an end to the obscene cruelty of horse slaughter.