



January 28, 2020

Representative Anna Eshoo
202 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative G.K. Butterfield
2080 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Michael Burgess
2161 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Eshoo, Vice Chairman Butterfield, and Ranking Member Burgess,

On behalf of Animal Protection of New Mexico (APNM) and its legislative arm Animal Protection Voters (APV), I am writing in support of the Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act, H.R. 961. This vital legislation would ban the export of American horses abroad for slaughter, and permanently prohibit the practice in our country.

APNM was founded in 1979 by concerned citizens with a goal to change the systems that cause animal cruelty in New Mexico. We are proud that APNM and APV have improved the quality of life for countless animals and communities through ensuring the passage of animal protection laws and regulations, as well as providing financial and provisional aid to families in need of support in caring for their animals. For example, our Equine Protection Fund, initiated in 2010, has saved over 1,200 horses, donkeys, and mules from slaughter by providing emergency feed, sterilization, and veterinary assistance to horse owners in financial distress, law enforcement agencies, and rescues and shelters.

Currently, approximately 80,000 American horses are still being sent across our borders for slaughter each year. Horse slaughter is cruel and dangerous, and rightfully unpopular. Horses are flight animals who cannot be slaughtered humanely, making death in a slaughterhouse full of acute pain, trauma and suffering.

Furthermore, polling shows that 70% of New Mexicans oppose horse slaughter here in our state. We see firsthand, with a boots-on-the-ground view and working closely with equine shelters and rescue groups: The support for responsible stewardship and truly humane outcomes for equines is tremendous.

In addition to the horrific and unacceptable cruelty involved in the horse slaughter industry, I urge you to also consider the serious health risks posed to the consumers of the meat that is produced. Many people don't realize that the horses who ultimately end up in slaughter plants were once working, racing, or companion animals. Throughout their lives many of these horses were given drugs—including routine medications and sometimes illegal substances—that are toxic to humans. This fact becomes even more frightening when you consider that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has no system in place to track which horses have been dosed with which substances, putting unsuspecting consumers at risk.

For all these reasons and more, I urge you to pass the SAFE Act (H.R. 961) for the sake of both horses and humans. Your support is crucial, and Americans are counting on your leadership on this legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Bonar', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Laura Bonar
Chief Program & Policy Officer
Animal Protection New Mexico
Animal Protection Voters