



May 26, 2022

Representative Janice D. Schakowsky
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2367 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Gus M. Bilirakis
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2354 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Schakowsky and Ranking Member Bilirakis, and Committee and Subcommittee members,

On behalf of our more than 9,300 members in the field of equine veterinary medicine, I am writing to express our **strong opposition** to the passage of **H.R. 3355 the Save America's Forgotten Equines Act of 2021**, also known as the "SAFE Act of 2021"

Opposition in Congress and in horse industry, veterinary, and other groups

The SAFE Act DOES NOT have broad bipartisan support. In addition, the two largest veterinary associations in the U.S., the American Association of Equine Practitioners and American Veterinary Medical Association, and the largest equine association in the world, the American Quarter Horse Association, along with countless other horse producers, and equine associations, do not support this legislation. Plus, there is no interest by the Senate to support such legislation and there is no similar legislation introduced in the Senate, nor has there been in previous Congresses of late.

How SAFE could harm horses

The Save America's Forgotten Equine (SAFE) Act, H.R.3355, would make it illegal to export horses for processing for human consumption. This legislation, if passed would have immediate and significant unintended consequences for thousands of domestic horses at risk for inadequate care. AAEP has always opposed this legislation because the association does not believe that any horse should suffer from abandonment, neglect, nor starvation.

In 2011, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) submitted a report to Congress which concluded that horse welfare in the U.S. had generally declined since the shuttering of horse processing facilities in the U.S. in 2007. The report clearly linked the 2007 ban with the decline in welfare conditions, discussing the notable increase in horse abandonments and increased incidents of investigation for abuse and neglect. The domestic ban removed a necessary tool for horse owners who may not have other humane options for horses that would otherwise face abandonment or starvation. Should the SAFE Act pass, it would further remove options for humane euthanasia for horse owners with unwanted horses.

Humane treatment of all horses is paramount. AAEP's position is consistent with those of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA):

"The processing of unwanted horses is currently a necessary aspect of the equine industry and provides a humane alternative to otherwise subjecting a horse to a continued life of discomfort, pain and possibly inadequate care or abandonment."

AAEP believes horses, including those destined for a processing facility, should be euthanized humanely with dignity in accordance with AVMA's Euthanasia Guidelines, endorsed by the AAEP as well. Furthermore, transportation to the processing facilities should be in accordance with the robust federal statute, regulation and guidelines passed in the Humane Transportation of Horses to Slaughter Act approved by the United States Department of Agriculture in 2002.

In February 2020, AAEP Past President Dr. Doug Corey from Oregon testified at an Energy and Commerce hearing on this issue. View Dr. Corey's testimony at <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/IF/IF14/20200129/110423/HHRG-116-IF14-Wstate-CoreyD-20200129.pdf>.

The AAEP has long opposed this legislation. The industry continues to work promote owner responsibility, aftercare, adoption and more. We encourage members of the committee to oppose this legislation as well and allow the industry to continue to care for its horses.

Sincerely,



Emma Read, DVM, MVSc, DACVS,
President 2022

American Association of Equine Practitioners