

Testimony of Katie Kraska, Director of Federal Legislation, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Subcommittee on Consumer Protection of the Energy & Commerce Committee
“Legislative Hearing to Protect Consumers and Strengthen the Economy”

Thursday, May 26, 2022 – 12:00 pm

Good afternoon and thank you Chairwoman Schakowsky, Ranking Member Bilirakis, and distinguished Members of the subcommittee for inviting me to provide testimony regarding issues critical to the protection of equine welfare and the equine community in the United States. I am Katie Kraska, Director of Federal Legislation for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). I would first like to recognize the leadership of Chair Schakowsky and Congressman Buchanan as the sponsors of the Save America’s Forgotten Equines (SAFE) Act (H.R. 3355), as well as Representatives Cohen and Fitzpatrick as the sponsors of the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act (H.R. 5441). We greatly appreciate the broad support these bills enjoy in Congress, including from so many on this committee.

The ASPCA was founded in 1866 as the very first animal welfare organization on the continent and we have long served as a leading voice for animal welfare in the United States. Our founder was inspired to create the ASPCA after witnessing the cruelties horses endured during a time in our history when they were the primary form of transportation. In fact, the ASPCA provided medical care for these animals, inventing the first equine ambulance and operating table to care for injured equines. Then and today, our goal for horses is both simple and ambitious - we work to ensure that all equines have good welfare.

To achieve this in the modern context, we have been amplifying our commitment to equine protection by establishing an Equine Welfare department and developing a robust stable of programs that have already revolutionized the partnerships between welfare organizations and equine industry groups resulting in a dramatic increase in support for equines nationwide. Through grants and our own care centers, we provide a multitude of critical services for equines, including safety net programs that offer support to owners with horses in need of veterinary or other care such as humane euthanasia, rehoming, retraining, adoption resources for horses in transition, and sheltering services in local communities, including rural areas, that greatly expand services for at-risk horses. We tenaciously advocate for legal protections from neglect, abuse, and cruelty.

I am here today to express our strong support for the SAFE Act and the PAST Act, two critical missing links in the existing systems vital for protecting American equines. Good welfare for horses in this country and security for the equine community cannot be achieved so long as horse slaughter and horse soring persist. Every horse, no matter how beloved, is one sale, one change of hands, one theft away from falling victim to slaughter across our borders. Despite Congress’s yearly repudiation of horse slaughter and a domestic ban, as well as passage of the Horse Protection Act to ban horse soring in 1970, these inhumane practices have lingered as a reality for American horses and the people who love them. These bills would finally put an end to the cruelty that Congress, much of the equine industry, riders and enthusiasts, and animal protection

groups have been working together to stop. Until they pass, we cannot achieve our mission of good welfare for horses in this country.

Save America's Forgotten Equines Act (H.R. 3355)

I. The Political History of Horse Slaughter in the U.S.

A groundswell of public outcry and bipartisan Congressional action ended the domestic slaughter of horses in 2007. Unfortunately, a legal loophole enables kill buyers on contract with foreign slaughterhouses to legally purchase horses in the U.S. and truck them long distances over the Mexican or Canadian border to be slaughtered for human consumption. An annual Appropriations Committee funding restriction, which prohibits USDA funding for horse slaughter inspections that are legally necessary for the sale of horsemeat, has been given broad support since Congress first enacted it in 2005 by wide margins in both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate. Since then, inclusion of this provision has become routine. In recent years, the protective language has been included in the base U.S. House and U.S. Senate Agriculture Appropriations bills and in President Trump's and President Biden's budget requests.

However, the current restriction has not prevented the continued export of equines for slaughter to other countries – a practice that existed even when foreign-owned plants were operating in the United States. Each year thousands of American horses are slaughtered in Canada and Mexico for human consumption. The SAFE Act would finally end the commercial slaughter of equines in the U.S. and their export for that purpose abroad by effectively closing the loophole that has existed since 2007.

The House of Representatives has acted repeatedly to end horse slaughter through authorizing means, passing a ban most recently as part of the INVEST in America Act in 2021. Unfortunately, that infrastructure package stalled in the Senate. The Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on this issue in the previous Congress, and legislation to end horse slaughter has passed the House with wide margins in prior Congresses.¹ It is time to get this legislation across the finish line.

The American public is vehemently and broadly opposed to horse slaughter. A poll released this year found that 83% of Americans oppose horse slaughter.² Opposition to this cruelty and support for closing the legal loophole that allows it to persist cuts across all socioeconomic factors tested – party, age, sex, geography, etc. Eighty-eight percent of Democrats and 78% of Republicans oppose slaughtering horses for human consumption. In each region examined – West, South, Northeast, and Midwest – acceptance of horse slaughter never exceeded 12%. The number of Americans opposed to slaughter has increased since a 2012 poll, which found that 80% of Americans wanted to end the slaughter of American horses. For the American public, this policy reform is long overdue.

¹ In 2006, Congress passed H.R. 503, the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act.

² Lake Research Partners Memo, see addendum.

The states of Texas, California, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Arizona, Illinois, and New Mexico have already banned horse slaughter or the sale of horsemeat or horse parts for human consumption. New Mexico and Mississippi both consider horsemeat adulterated due to the ubiquitous presence of toxic substances associated with it. Unfortunately, state-level bans are difficult to enforce and do not protect horses taken across states lines and sold into the slaughter pipeline. Until the SAFE Act is law, equines will continue to be exported for slaughter, subverting the will of Congress and the American public and causing harm to horses, owners and the equine industry as a whole.

II. Protecting the Equine Community

Closing the loophole that allows American horses to go to slaughter across our borders will not just be beneficial to animals, it will also be highly beneficial to the industries that are built around them and the people whose lives are enriched by equines. Government statistics show a significant downward trend in the annual number of equines exported for slaughter, dropping from more than 100,000 just a few years ago to 22,979 in 2021.³ The number of horses exported in 2020 and 2021 is the smallest recorded since 1980; 2022 export figures are on track to be even lower. Despite the positive progress we have made on restricting and reducing the slaughter of American horses, the equine community has continued to live with the fear and harmful impacts that it brings; and for horse owners, the horrifying specter of a cherished horse winding up in the slaughter pipeline is never far from mind.⁴ The harms posed by the horse slaughter pipeline to the equine community are vast and multidimensional.

a. Fearful Owners, At-risk Horses

The legal loophole that allows American horses to be exported abroad for slaughter causes suffering and neglect here in the U.S. There are approximately 7-8 million horses in the U.S., and each of their owners has likely considered the horrifying possibility that their trusted 4-H pony, polo partner, lesson master, racehorse, show winner, or pasture pet might, with one bad sale, end up on a truck to slaughter.⁵ It is common for horses to change hands throughout their lives. Each point that a horse changes from one owner to the next represents another opportunity for them to slip through the cracks – not because they are old, unwanted, or undesirable – but simply because kill buyers can turn a quick profit off unwitting owners.

Unfortunately, this ever-present risk to horses and their owners creates severe downstream consequences to equine welfare. Many owners, including those who are no longer physically or financially able to care for their animals, are not willing to take the risk of unknowingly selling them to the wrong person. There will always be a variety of reasons that someone might not be able to care for their horse – finances, health, education about upkeep, etc., so owners need to feel comfortable rehoming their horse; and we know that so long as horse slaughter is an option,

³ See addendum with graph and chart.

⁴ For example, a guide published by the Paso Fine Horse Association helps owners avoid the slaughter pipeline when rehoming their horses. <https://www.pfha.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Seller-Be-Informed.pdf>.

⁵ *American Horse Council Annual Report*, 2020. <https://www.horsecouncil.org/annual-reports/>.

they will not. As a result of this looming fear, well-intentioned owners may unintentionally allow their horses to fall ill or suffer neglect. Rehoming and safety net options exist for these horses, but the fear of the slaughter pipeline can paralyze owners. We must remove that fear.

Our data suggests that the threat of slaughter causes 70-80% of owners to risk their own horses' welfare by keeping them, rather than rehoming them, because they are afraid that their horse may unknowingly wind up in the hands of a kill buyer. The ASPCA piloted two open admission facilities for equines in 2018 and 2019 in Dallas and Oklahoma City, respectively, and then opened our permanent Equine Transition and Adoption Center in the Oklahoma City area in 2020. Our team works with veterinarians and rehoming groups to run a triage center that provides veterinary care, rehoming, and humane euthanasia, when needed. Those bringing their horses to us for one reason or another continually cited the fear of slaughter as the reason they didn't rehome their horse sooner.⁶ Though horses are going across our borders for slaughter, the existence of the slaughter pipeline causes suffering here in the U.S. A permanent ban on horse slaughter would eliminate this disturbing, pervasive risk to equine welfare.

b. Breeding Grounds for Disease Outbreak and Spread

Shipping sick or compromised horses across the country creates a serious risk to other horses and their owners. Many equine pathogens are highly communicable and can be difficult to contain. In the slaughter pipeline, horses from many different backgrounds mix together without testing or quarantining. It is common for horses arriving at kill pens or purchased from kill pens to be sick, injured, stressed, capable of spreading disease, or in need of veterinary attention and isolation. Kill buyers rarely practice good horse health and disease management procedures at their facilities. Dr. Angela Petzel-McCluskey, National Equine Epidemiologist for USDA-APHIS noted in an interview to the Paulick Report, "Certainly I don't know of any slaughter buyers who have any routine cleaning and disinfection . . . we don't have any requirement for them to do a chemical cleaning of the conveyance. That would be another cost to them, and they make their money off limiting overhead costs."⁷

⁶ Through our own work, we know the fear of slaughter by a majority of horse owners stands directly in the way of good welfare. Owners who would safely rehome their horses without the fear of them ending up on the slaughter market find themselves holding on to their horses even when they may no longer have the resources or ability to fully care for them, even with safe rehoming options available. Consider the following two examples. After her grandkids left, Sally, 80 years old, could no longer properly care for the horse that had been in her family for years. The horse was a bit portly, but sweet and a wonderful riding partner. When Sally found the ASPCA's Equine Transition and Adoption Center (ETAC), she was relieved to the point of tears, saying that she was worried all she had done was fatten the mare up for slaughter. Without knowledge of a safe rehoming option, this horse's welfare would have been put at risk as she could no longer care for her. Cherri's husband was the equestrian in the family, and after he passed, she was terrified of what would become of their two horses. Not knowing how to properly care for the animals, she needed to find them a new home, but her late husband had been extremely worried that they would end up in the hands of a kill buyer. Thankfully, Cherri found the ETAC, and shared with us through tears how harmful the threat of slaughter is to horse owners.

⁷ "Anonymous Horses": Kill Pen Rescues Come with Serious Health Risks" *Paulick Report* 2/22/17

https://paulickreport.com/horse-care-category/vet-topics/anonymous-horses-kill-pen-rescues-come-serious-health-risks/?_token=e6491bece3.

Additionally, kill buyers seldom document whether the animals they are loading and unloading at various places around the country are vaccinated or currently ill. Petzel-McCluskey spoke to this point in the same interview: “One of our concerns with this type of environment is these kill buyers may have been finding or employing veterinarians that are not actually going out and visually inspecting the horses, which would explain why you have horses with these obvious [strangles] abscesses,” she said of the Florida horses with full-blown illness days after leaving a kill pen. “They’re not forming overnight as the horse is transiting. Obviously, they would have had a fever and not been eating well [before that].” The article goes on to note that “Ultimately, the contagious disease issue is unlikely to be eliminated when it comes to high-traffic horse sales like the kill pens. Pelzel-McCluskey says there is simply too much movement and too many horses from different health backgrounds to eliminate the risk.”⁸

Poor hygiene, forged documents, and lack of veterinary care can spell massive risks for the horses and their owners when these animals mingle with other equines in the community and are transported thousands of miles across state lines to the Mexican or Canadian border. For example, in 2015, Justin White was arrested and charged with five felony counts of ill treatment of animals and torture after South Carolina police discovered starving horses and carcasses at a kill buyer’s property. In 2016, he moved horses to North Carolina to his operation called Carolina Feedlots and faced thousands of dollars in fines and the loss of his livestock dealer license after officials determined that he failed to perform required disease testing. The Veterinary Division of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services wrote in a violation notice that White moved five horses across state lines without an inspection required to certify good health while knowing that they were ill.⁹ The law expressly prohibits diseased animals from being transported, slaughtered, and entering the food system.

c. Incentivizing Fraud

The fear that keeps so many horse owners from rehoming their horses is well founded. Kill buyers may pose as responsible re-homers, answering sale ads and even knocking on doors. When Lindsay Rosentrater, a young mother in Georgia, needed to find a safe haven for her beloved horse, Willie, she thought she found the perfect option with Fallon Blackwood. Blackwood was a Tuskegee University veterinary student who promised to let Willie live out his days in safe retirement. But after the horse changed hands, Rosentrater became suspicious when Blackwood would not communicate or share pictures of Willie. She later learned that Blackwood had been under suspicion of taking almost 50 horses from owners in six states under the pretense of offering them safe care. Blackwood allegedly sold them all to slaughter. Blackwood has been indicted in Alabama for intent to defraud (Section 13A-8-21) and was charged with a felony count of intent obtaining property under false pretense in North Carolina.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ “18 Horses Seized from Thompson Kill Pen for Alleged Neglect” *Horse Authority* 3/14/19 <https://horseauthority.co/18-horses-seized-thompson-kill-pen-alleged-neglect>.

¹⁰ “Alabama Veterinary Student Arrested at Rodeo, Accused of Selling Rescued Horses to Slaughter” *Birmingham News* 1/15/19 <https://www.al.com/news/birmingham/2019/01/alabama-veterinary-student-arrested-at-rodeo-accused-of-selling-rescued-horses-to-slaughter.html>;
Fox5 Atlanta 1/17/19 <https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/vet-student-indicted-for-taking-horses-with-intent-to-defraud>

Disturbingly, this story is not unique. Before Blackwood, there was Kelsey Lefever, charged with five counts of fraud in Pennsylvania, including three felonies, for similar misrepresentations. Reports detail that Lefever told state police she sold as many as 120 horses to kill buyers for slaughter in Canada after telling their owners she would find adoptive homes for them once their racing careers were over.¹¹ These are only a few examples of fraud that were discovered. It is impossible to know how many owners and horses fall victim to such schemes. The horse slaughter pipeline also incentivizes theft. For example, California saw a 34% decrease in horse theft after enacting a statewide ban.¹²

Another growing problem created by the legal loophole that allows horses to be exported for slaughter is known as “kill pen bailouts.” This phenomenon has grown with the internet, distorting the market and defrauding well-intentioned members of the equine community, most especially those who provide meaningful rehoming options. Some kill buyers and kill pens (holding facilities for horses often at auction before they are sent to slaughter) have discovered the lengths that the public is willing to go to protect horses from being trucked to Canada or Mexico to meet such a grim fate. Kill pen bail out programs will buy a horse from auction, post the horse online and market them as a crisis case, claiming that they will be sent to slaughter on a specific date if they are not “rescued” through payment of a fee, or “bail” that is often far above the meat price. Sometimes, the horse is truly rescued. Sometimes, the horse is sent to slaughter regardless. Sometimes, the horse is reposted on another website and the deceitful bail out scheme occurs again.

Kill pen bailouts have proven to be a lucrative deception for kill buyers who prey on the public’s aversion to such extreme cruelty. This artificial emergency fetches high bailout fees from well-intentioned horse lovers and rehoming groups, double, triple, or more than meat prices. Payment of the “bail” price provides significant profit for the kill buyer, which further funds their slaughter-brokerage business. They will continue to purchase more horses; some to be sold via bailouts, and others who will be sent to slaughter in Canada and Mexico. These bailout operations fuel the slaughter industry, lining the pockets of buyers who then purchase even more horses for slaughter.

Additionally, horses with injuries and lameness often don’t receive vital medical care, causing unnecessary pain and suffering. Horses who are suffering and injured will likely inspire more urgency in the appeals for a compassionate, unsuspecting person to “bail” them at inflated prices. Individuals or rehoming facilities that bail horses from kill pens must frequently bear significant, unforeseen costs—beyond the bail price—to get the horses healthy.¹³ As long as it is legal to ship a horse to slaughter, fraudulent schemes will continue to cause immeasurable harm to the equine community in the U.S. Closing this loophole will protect not only the horses but also the people that love them.

¹¹ “Charges: PA Woman Sold Horses for Slaughter” *BloodHorse* 1/19/12 <https://www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/articles/132265/charges-pa-woman-sold-horses-for-slaughter>

¹² Statistics sourced from California Livestock and Identification Bureau, http://cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Livestock_ID/.

¹³ “Horse ‘Kill Buying’ Legal, but Critics See Abuse, Deception” *Augusta Chronicle* 1/17/15 <https://www.augustachronicle.com/story/news/2015/01/17/stub-1022/14381435007/>.

d. Burdens on Rehoming Organizations

Kill pen bailouts have another nefarious impact on the equine community – they, along with the slaughter pipeline more broadly, divert funds away from reputable equine rescues, adoption organizations, and sanctuaries trying to help horses in need. Rather than donating to equine nonprofits working to help at-risk horses, well-meaning horse lovers send funds to kill buyers thinking they will protect horses from slaughter, when in reality it only means more will fall victim to this scheme.

The loophole that allows horses to be funneled to foreign slaughterhouses creates massive challenges for these groups to overcome. Auctions are a common place for both rescues and kill buyers to frequent, along with private owners and trainers. Kill buyers often focus their bids on horses that a rescue group is trying save, thereby depleting that rescue's resources and reducing competition for the other horses at the auction. Rescuers should not have to compete against a for-profit industry, and public policy should promote rather than hinder, good equine welfare.

Finally, kill buyers often bring sick, malnourished, injured, or elderly horses to auction with them to trade for healthier animals. Prices are based on weight, so heavier, healthier, younger, stronger horses are more desirable. This means that rescues then end up with horses in bad condition that take more time, energy, and resources to rehabilitate or humanely euthanize. Meanwhile, a truckload of healthy horses head to the border. This places additional burdens on the equine rescue community, lengthening the time it takes to adopt a horse out so that another may take its place.

The Homes for Horses Coalition, a member organization of 440 horse rescues and sanctuaries across the country, knows this all too well. That is why every single member endorses the SAFE Act and supports a ban on horse slaughter. To be clear, if the legal loophole for slaughter is closed, these are the groups that will be assisting the animals in the pipeline, and they are collectively urging that this happen immediately. This legislation is necessary for them to do their jobs, redirecting diverted resources, and allowing them to save more lives.

e. Public Perception of and Participation in the Equine Industry

Each segment of the equine industry is built on public perception, and in some sectors, this critical component of their business has been threatened. The most public or visible equine industries, such as Thoroughbred and Standardbred horseracing, have made significant strides towards protecting their horses, both on and off the track. Many organizations and industry stakeholders have created and resourced aftercare and career transition programs. Racetracks have also enacted and enforced policies against sale to slaughter. Industry stakeholders have been stepping up to protect their equine athletes from meeting this fate, but without closing the legal loophole allowing their export for this purpose, slaughter will continue to be a stain on equine industries.

Many industry groups support an end to horse slaughter because they care for and respect the horses and know that closing this loophole is vital for the protection of their horses and the sustainability of their businesses. Demonstrating commitment to this mission, prominent members of the equine community announced The Final Stretch Alliance to End Horse Slaughter. In an open letter to Congressional Leadership, Hall of Fame trainers and jockeys, major horse racing institutions, notable equine advocates, and animal protection organizations announced a collaborative effort to pass the SAFE Act.¹⁴ The list includes The Jockey Club, Breeders' Cup, The Jockey's Guild, the Stronach Group, the U.S. Trotting Association, the New York Racing Association, and Maryland Horse Council, among many others. If equine industries are to thrive in the future, the public must trust that the horses involved are being treated humanely both during and after their careers.

III. Horsemeat Jeopardizes Food Safety

Public antipathy toward the commercial slaughter of our nation's equines underscores how we define and value these animals – as work partners, athletes, and trusted friends – not as food. This is significant not only as a cultural norm, but to illustrate how that perception and categorization translates into the regulatory framework under which our equines are governed.

Horses are not raised for their meat in the U.S. They live in backyards and on racetracks, in show barns and on ranches, but none live in a setting where their caretakers expect them to eventually become food. Therefore, these horses are regularly given a wide variety of drugs, medications, and treatments approved for use on equines and necessary for the welfare of the animal. These drugs and chemicals are administered routinely, sometimes daily, and there is no system or reason to track how often or what type of treatments equines are given. Further, horses change hands an average eight times throughout their lives, and it is extremely common for owners, along with veterinarians and trainers, to administer medications routinely.¹⁵ Many of the substances given to horses as part of their daily care are expressly banned by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use on animals meant for human consumption.¹⁶

Equines are not intended for human consumption, so their health history is not monitored or regulated throughout their lives. Their lives typically involve some form of work or performance and routine health care, all of which would lead to ingesting or absorbing useful and helpful substances that are strictly prohibited for food animals. Contrast this reality with the way food animals are raised and treated from birth to death. They are given approved feed and drugs. Producers are required to follow regulatory guidelines determined by federal agencies working to keep our food safe. Equines exist completely outside that regulatory framework because their owners, veterinarians, and trainers do not anticipate that they will end up in the food supply. Yet

¹⁴ Aspca.org/thefinalstretch/ See addendum.

¹⁵ 91% of horse owners give their equines medications, per American Pet Products Association *National Pet Owners Survey 2019-2020*.

¹⁶ J.A. Bukowski, DVM, MPH, Ph.D., and S. Aiello, DVM, ELS. "Routine Health Care of Horses" *Merck Veterinary Manual* July 2011; modified October 2016 <https://www.merckvetmanual.com/horse-owners/routine-care-and-breeding-of-horses/routine-health-care-of-horses/>; "Pain Management Options for Horses" *The Horse* 3/23/11 <https://thehorse.com/118918/pain-management-options-for-horses/>.

each year we indirectly allow thousands of pounds of toxic meat from American horses to be exported for human consumption.

Countries that eat or slaughter horses for human consumption have dealt with a host of issues related to cross-contamination of other meat products and banned substances in meat.¹⁷ Recognizing the dangers that American horsemeat poses, not only in terms of health risks but also in consumer confidence of inspected food products, the European Commission (EC) in 2015 banned all horsemeat imports from Mexico, where the majority of American horses are slaughtered. The decision followed a scathing 2014 audit of EU-certified Mexican horse slaughter plants conducted by the EC's Food and Veterinary Office (FVO). The audit report cited lack of traceability and controls on substances given to equines throughout their lives.¹⁸

IV. Cruelty

The entire animal protection and welfare community, representing millions of Americans, equine professionals, and veterinarians nationwide, wants to end horse slaughter. Animal protection organizations large and small, urban and rural, equine and not, recognize the inherent cruelty of long-distance transport and commercial slaughter of these highly sensitive animals.

a. The Slaughter Pipeline

The pipeline that brings a horse to an abattoir in Canada or Mexico often starts after an auction, where horses come from racetracks, family farms, backyards, lesson programs, horse shows, and so on. They arrive in kill pens from all over the country, and then often travel up to 28 hours with no food, water, or rest in route to the border. Crammed into trailers with unfamiliar animals, horses endure grueling journeys that often result in horrific injuries or death. When such facilities were operating in the U.S., the USDA documented horses arriving at the slaughterhouse with dislodged eyeballs, detached limbs, and downed horses who had been trampled to death.¹⁹ A 2021 study published in the journal *Meat Science* found “that carcass bruising was a highly

¹⁷ An article published in the *Food and Chemical Toxicology Journal* estimated that 9,000 pounds of meat taken from horses with known exposure to phenylbutazone were sent abroad for human consumption over the five-year study period – the entire sample they were observing. Another study looking at the prevalence of comingled horsemeat in beef products in Mexico found that of the approximately 10% of samples that contained equine tissue, a disturbing figure in itself, all of them contained clenbuterol – a drug banned for use on animals meant for human consumption.

Dodman, Blondeau, & Morini. 2010. “Association of phenylbutazone with horses bought for slaughter: A public health risk” *Food and Chemical Toxicology*. (48)5.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0278691510001225>;

Lozano, et al. 2020 “Horse meat sold as beef and consequent clenbuterol residues in the unregulated Mexican marketplace” *Food Control*. 1:10. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0956713519306176>.

¹⁸ In 2017 the EC acted again, in light of an FVO audit of Canadian horse slaughter facilities. This time, the EC implemented new regulations requiring that all American horses destined for slaughter in Canada be held for six months prior to slaughter if their meat was destined for EU member countries. While the intent is to control banned substances, many of these substances are banned in *any concentration and for use on food animals at any point in their lives*.

“Final Report of an Audit Carried Out in Mexico from 24 June to 04 July 2014”:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep_details_2_en.cfm?rep_id=3364#.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2005, FOIA Request #06-108.

prevalent problem (79% of carcasses had bruising)” in American horses slaughtered in Mexico.²⁰ In other words, equines in transport to slaughter experience high severe injury rates prior to their slaughter due to the inhumane conditions of the slaughter pipeline.

The cruelty of this industry continues when they arrive at the slaughterhouse. Humane slaughter, by definition, requires that an animal be rendered unconscious prior to being dismembered. This standard is virtually impossible to meet with equines, especially in a commercial slaughterhouse. Horses are extremely difficult to immobilize and render insensible to pain, especially when using equipment designed for other species. In the stunning box, horses’ heads are unrestrained and may flail and flinch in a manner inconsistent with humane slaughter. Inevitably, the captive bolt will miss its target multiple times, sending the injured equine into a panic, and potentially to dismemberment while conscious. The 2014 audit of EU-approved slaughter plants in Mexico documented persistent and extremely serious welfare concerns during transport and at the slaughter facilities.²¹ Inspectors noted that at multiple facilities handlers did not even bother to confirm that an animal had been effectively stunned before being hoisted for dismemberment. Until the SAFE Act becomes law, these horrors will continue for American horses.

b. Commercial Slaughter is Not Euthanasia

The ASPCA supports humane euthanasia for horses when quality of life is untenable. The word “euthanasia” literally means a good death. When we think of euthanasia, we imagine old, sick, or injured animals needing a peaceful and dignified end of life in the hands of a professional. The slaughter pipeline from start to finish is the opposite way to end a life. Loading an already-suffering horse into a transport vehicle and shipping the horse for up to 28 hours with no food, rest, or room to move to a slaughterhouse can in no way be characterized as euthanasia. Slaughterhouses are designed for food production – they are not designed to be sites of humane euthanasia. Dr. Nicholas Dodman, in his 2008 testimony before the House Judiciary Committee on behalf of Veterinarians for Equine Welfare, stated, “No ethical veterinarian, faced with a client who has a horse that is old, sick or otherwise no longer wanted, would suggest that the horse in question should be put on a truck and hauled thousands of miles to slaughter. Instead, the veterinarian would most likely suggest truly humane euthanasia via chemical injection.”²²

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the horses being sent to slaughter are most often not in need of euthanasia, and the horses in need of euthanasia are often not the horses sent to slaughter. The USDA’s own data showed that when horse slaughter plants were operating in the U.S., 92.3% of horses at those facilities were in good condition.²³ As noted previously, kill buyers profit from robust, large animals, which mean they avoid or offload equines with poor body condition. This reality illuminates the logical flaw in the suggestion that slaughter serves as

²⁰ Genaro C. Miranda-de la Lama a,d,*, C´esar A. Gonz´alez-Castro b, Francisco J. Guti´errez-Pi˜na b, Morris Villarroel c, Gustavo A. Maria a, Laura X. Est´vez-Moreno, “Horse welfare at slaughter: A novel approach to analyse bruised carcasses based on severity, damage patterns and their association with pre-slaughter risk factors” *Meat Science* 10/13/20.

²¹ European Commission Food and Veterinary Office audit report 12/4/14 http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep_details_2_en.cfm?rep_id=3364.

²² House Judiciary Committee hearing transcript, 7/31/08, p. 65 - <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg43830/pdf/CHRG-110hhrg43830.pdf>

²³ Grandin, Temple, *Survey of Trucking Practices and Injury to Slaughter Horses*.

an outlet for horses in poor condition or health. To increase profits, kill buyers often unload underweight horses at auction and buy healthier ones to take across the border.²⁴ The horses left behind are then at greater welfare risk, potentially suffering additional neglect if no home is found.

This is not a system designed for a humane end-of-life option, nor is it a form of population control. It is a system designed to meet fluctuating and, in recent years, dwindling foreign demand for horsemeat regardless of the U.S. population of horses. Over the years, the number of horses in the U.S. has hovered between seven million and nine million, while the number of horses exported for slaughter has risen and declined dramatically.²⁵ For example, between 1990 and 2000, the number of horses exported for slaughter decreased by 87% from 345,700 to 47,134. During the same time period, the horse population in the U.S. was relatively stable and did not decrease by 87%. Recorded data since 1980 shows that 2020 and 2021 saw the fewest number of equines exported abroad for slaughter, and 2022 is on track to see another 30% reduction. The horse population has not been dramatically declining in this same time frame. The number of horses sent to slaughter does not mirror the population in the U.S. or function as population control; it mirrors the demand for horsemeat.

V. Now is the Time

Even in the two years since this bill was last heard in the Energy and Commerce Committee, the equine community has made great strides towards protecting our nation's equines and promoting their welfare. But there is no way that industry, owners, trainers, riders, enthusiasts, veterinarians, and adoption organizations can achieve their goals for equines in this country while slaughter is a present risk. Despite all of our best efforts, the harmful impacts of horse slaughter will persist as long as this legal loophole allows kill buyers to prey.

Adoption organizations have been increasing their capacity, fewer and fewer horses are going to slaughter, and a massive number of homes exist for at-risk equines in the U.S. Equine rescues, combined with vibrant and growing rehoming and shelter options surfacing online across the country, are equipped to take in and help care for horses who might wind up in the slaughter pipeline.²⁶ Removing the barriers that slaughter creates for horses in transition will have a tremendously positive and synergistic impact for the rehoming and transition work we and the equine industry have in place.

Even more encouraging is how many homes are available to horses in need. Americans care deeply about horses and stand ready, willing, and able to help in large numbers. A peer-reviewed 2017 publication revealed data from Edge Research, which shows that 2.3 million Americans

²⁴ "Horse Rescue Heroes" *Horse Plus Humane* 2020.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjEjug7ZPeU&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR0Dw-iVRPosKbA3cZPIa0Y3BOTpDKYCr7tElDzDh4dgTn6fCOgfBZ_Zsk.

²⁵ *2017 Economic Impact Study of the U.S. Horse Industry* American Horse Council

<https://www.horsecouncil.org/resources/horsecouncil-publications/>.

²⁶ *Equine Welfare Data Collective, Fourth Report*. United Horse Coalition <https://unitedhorsecoalition.org/ewdc-reports/>.

have the resources and the strong desire to adopt a horse right now.²⁷ If even just half that many homes are available, we can rehome every horse sent to slaughter for decades through education and networking alone. This data demonstrates that the challenge is not about creating homes, but about matching them with horses in need.

The ASPCA and hundreds of other organizations across the country are working resolutely and innovatively to solve equine welfare issues on the ground, but we cannot truly succeed while the slaughter pipeline remains open. With the strong support of the American public, clear Congressional support for a ban, and mounting harmful impacts on the broad equine community, now is the time to end the slaughter of American horses for human consumption. I urge you to support the SAFE Act and open a new humane chapter in the history of our nation's equines.

Prevent All Soring Tactics Act (H.R. 5441)

It has been more than 50 years since Congress passed the Horse Protection Act (HPA) to protect show horses from the cruel practice of soring. The HPA authorizes the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to inspect horses at shows, exhibits, auctions, and sales for signs of soring and to pursue penalties against violators. Despite this law and clear Congressional intent to end horse soring, this practice continues to be pervasive in some horse showing communities. The USDA has failed to effectively implement the HPA to protect horses from this extreme, intentional cruelty. The PAST Act would finally carry out Congress' intent behind the HPA by reiterating a ban on soring techniques and devices, eliminating the current self-policing program that has created a loophole in enforcement, and increasing penalties for violators.

I. Soring is Animal Cruelty

Horse soring was developed in the 1950s to improve a horse's chances of winning certain types of horse shows.²⁸ Soring involves intentional infliction of pain on a horse's hooves and legs to produce an exaggerated high step known as "The Big Lick." Soring is most often used on high-stepping breeds such as Tennessee Walking, Racking, and Spotted Saddle horses—all known to have calm, gentle dispositions. Their temperaments make them more vulnerable to this abuse.

Trainers utilize a variety of soring methods to inflict pain and achieve this unnatural gait. One such method includes rubbing chemicals like mustard oil, diesel fuel, and kerosene on the horse's limbs then wrapping their limbs in plastic for days to allow the chemicals to burn and penetrate deep into the flesh. Chains are then applied that slide up and down the painful portion of the legs. When the horse tries to avoid the searing sensation, it produces an exaggerated high step.

²⁷ Weiss, et al. "Estimating the Availability of Potential Homes for Unwanted Horses in the United States" *Animals* (7) 7. <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/7/7/53>

²⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General 2010 *Animal and Plant Inspection Service Administration of the Horse Protection Program and the Slaughter Horse Transport Program* at 6. <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/33601-02-KC.pdf>

Another soring method includes filing down the horse's hoof to expose the nerves and sensitive tissue and placing sharp objects around the area to maximize pain. Sored horses are often forced to wear action devices like chains or heavy "stacks" to further exaggerate gaits. Shoe stacks, used in lieu of regular horse shoes, force the horse to stand at an unnatural angle, as the stacks are often four to five inches thick and can weigh up to eight pounds per foot.²⁹ To affix these to the hoof, a metal band is wrapped around the top and often tightened to produce additional pain. Foreign objects like nails, tacks, or screws are often inserted between the horse's hoof and the stacked shoes so that the horse suffers pain when any pressure is applied to the hoof. The Horse Protection Act regulations currently allow for the use of one action device (boot, collar, chain, etc.) per limb, so long as the action device does not weigh more than six ounces.³⁰ However, we believe the use of *any* action devices is cruel and unnecessary and should be abolished without exception.

No matter the method of soring, the severe physical and psychological pain that these animals endure amounts to torture. Sored horses often end up crippled or die at a young age due to stress related illness. Under the PAST Act, all action devices would at long last be fully prohibited. Likewise, it is imperative that stricter civil and criminal penalties be imposed to deter those who would seek to violate the law for a competitive edge.

Inspectors are trained to detect soring in a variety of ways, including visual observation and physical inspection. Swollen, inflamed tissue or damaged skin on the legs and scarring, are indicative of soring. During physical inspections, inspectors apply pressure over the areas typically sored to test for pain responses. However, it is not uncommon for trainers and exhibitors to condition their horses from reacting to soring-related pain by beating or burning them—a practice known as "stewarding." Technologies such as chemical analysis of prohibited foreign substances,³¹ digital radiography, and thermography,³² when paired with physical observation, can help inspectors better detect soring and identify violations to protect horses from this cruelty.

II. The Political History of Horse Soring

Horse soring remains a common practice in some corners of horse show communities, largely due to the USDA's failure to effectively enforce the 1970 passed Horse Protection Act and an increasing reliance on the industry-regulated reporting system that turns a blind eye to violators and allows these cruel methods of abuse to perpetuate. self-regulation by the same industry that developed these methods of abuse. In recent years, Congress has increased funding from \$1 million in 2020 to 2 million in 2021 for HPA enforcement, and we applaud Congress for increasing the USDA's budget to over \$3 million in the 2022 fiscal year. With increased funding,

²⁹ "Horse Soring and The Past Act S. 1121 and H.R. 3268" American Veterinary Medical Association 7/29/15 https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/resources/2015-Soring-Booklet-Final_Logo.pdf;

"Horse Soring FAQs" Fund for Horses. <https://fundforhorses.org/fact-sheets/horse-soring-faqs/>.

³⁰ 9 C.F.R. § 11.2.

³¹ Substances are either used to sore horses or to mask underlying soring and evade detection by inspectors.

³² Thermography cameras detect signs of inflammation on the horse.

the USDA can dispatch its own veterinarians to more horse shows for proper inspection. The USDA can also purchase better equipment to detect soring on horses trained to evade detection.

Concern to end the cruel practice of soring crosses party and industry lines. Last Congress, the PAST Act garnered incredible bipartisan support in the House and passed with an overwhelming majority under suspension. Major animal protection and veterinary organizations including the Humane Society of the United States, the Animal Welfare Institute, the American Veterinary Medical Association, and the American Association of Equine Practitioners vehemently oppose horse soring. Likewise, horse industry leaders including the American Horse Council and the American Quarter Horse Association all endorse the PAST Act. Moreover, Americans are showing fierce support to end horse soring. For example, according to a 2020 poll, constituents in Tennessee and Kentucky—two states where horse soring is most prevalent—oppose horse soring by more than 83% and 78% respectively.³³

III. Ending Industry Self-Policing

The USDA has failed to effectively enforce the HPA, largely due to a program created for industry to police themselves. Under the Horse Protection Program, the USDA certifies Horse Industry Organizations (HIOs) to hire, train, and license their own inspectors known as Designated Qualified Persons (DQPs). DQPs are usually persons who have a basic knowledge of horses and the equine industry but are not required to hold a license in veterinary medicine.³⁴ The DQP system presents an inherent conflict of interest because DQPs are often exhibitors themselves, sometimes at the same horse shows they sponsor.³⁵ Their obvious stake in preserving standing with fellow exhibitors and the horse show managers who hire them results in a reluctance to issue violations, making the DQP program inadequate to ensure that horses are not being abused.

The OIG's 2010 audit found that DQPs were significantly more likely to issue warnings in lieu of tickets or would issue tickets to persons other than the exhibitor.³⁶ Both practices are in contravention to the regulations and allow violators to continue competing without serving penalties, essentially enabling the cruel practice of soring to persist. The OIG noted that DQPs associate themselves more closely with the needs of the exhibitors than with the horses they are

³³ "Poll Shows Support for Anti-Soring Legislation" *Equus Magazine* 11/2/20

[https://equusmagazine.com/news/poll-shows-anti-soring-](https://equusmagazine.com/news/poll-shows-anti-soring-support/#:~:text=(Nov.,and%20spotted%20saddle%20horse%20breeds;)

[support/#:~:text=\(Nov.,and%20spotted%20saddle%20horse%20breeds;](https://equusmagazine.com/news/poll-shows-anti-soring-support/#:~:text=(Nov.,and%20spotted%20saddle%20horse%20breeds;)

Kitty Block and Sara Amundson, 2020. "New poll shows overwhelming support in Tennessee for ending horse soring with the PAST Act." Humane Society of the United States <https://blog.humanesociety.org/2020/09/new-poll-shows-overwhelming-support-in-tennessee-for-ending-horse-soring-with-the-past-act.html>.

³⁴ 9 C.F.R. § 11.7.

³⁵ U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General 2010 *Animal and Plant Inspection Service Administration of the Horse Protection Program and the Slaughter Horse Transport Program* at 1.

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/33601-02-KC.pdf>

³⁶ For example, during field work, the OIG found instances where DQPs issued violations to individuals who were not actually responsible for the horse being inspected (e.g., the farm hand or an elderly relative), or DQPs would deliberately write incorrect names on the tickets so that exhibitors could avoid penalties. *Id.* at 2; 14.

charged with protecting and, therefore, do not always inspect horses according to the requirements of the HPA.

Likewise, in a 2021 report, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) criticized the self-policing program and urged that only accredited veterinarians be allowed to inspect horses. Statistics show that DQPs are more likely to issue violations when being observed by USDA inspectors. For example, the OIG's 2010 audit notes that from 2005 to 2008, APHIS veterinarians were present at only 6% of all shows, yet 49% of all violations cited by DQPs during that period were found at those horse shows. This demonstrates that DQPs noticed half of the violations they found at the very small number of shows where they were being observed by USDA inspectors.³⁷ To carry out the will of Congress and protect horses from soring, the current industry-run inspection program must be eliminated in favor of independent, non-biased veterinarians performing all inspections. The PAST Act would ensure that only licensed professionals without conflicts of interest enforce this important law to protect horses from abuse.

IV. Rewarding Humane Practices

The PAST Act is critical not only to protect horses from cruelty, but also to preserve the integrity of the horse show industry. Soring creates an unfair advantage for exhibitors who break the law, and it prevents competitors with sound horses from competing fairly. The Tennessee Walking, Racking and Spotted Saddle Horse breeds have a beautiful, majestic natural gait that can be cultivated over time with regular riding and conditioning and without causing the horse pain or distress. However, some exhibitors have abandoned a natural gait in favor of an exaggerated gait that cannot be achieved, even with the best training and conditioning, except through soring. This unnatural, exaggerated gait is rewarded by judges at the highest levels of showing, giving cruelty a competitive edge. Pam Reband—former vice-president of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' & Exhibitors' Association and advocate against horse soring—commented on the edge caused by soring. Reband had frequently sored her horses in the 1960s and admitted to being devastated when the HPA was passed because it decreased her chances of winning. She says, “I had been dreaming about winning at Celebration [the country's most prestigious Tennessee Walking Horse show], and I knew that sound, we wouldn't be able to do it.”³⁸ Another horse show competitor calls soring a “quick fix” that is “necessary” to keep up with the competition.³⁹ The PAST Act would prevent the proliferation and reward for such an unfair, inhumane, and illegal advantage.

³⁷ *Id.* at 2.

³⁸ Meszoly, J. “EQUUS Special Report: Why Soring Persists” *Equus Magazine* November 2020 https://equusmagazine.com/horse-world/soring_030706-8192/.

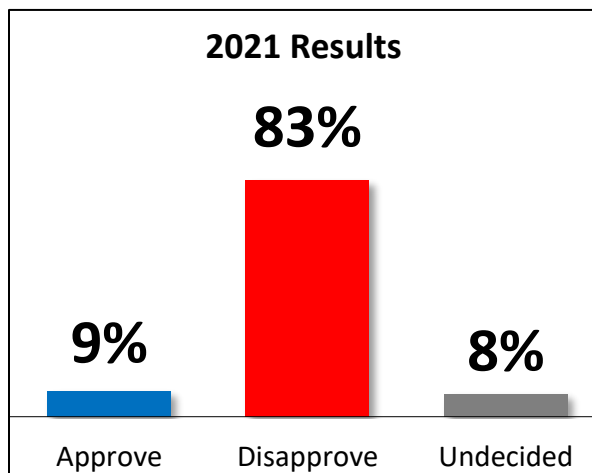
³⁹ “Indictment Shines Light on Abuse Allegations in Tennessee Walking Horse Industry” *Chattanooga Times Free Press* 3/18/12 <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/news/story/2012/mar/18/indictment-shines-light-abuse-allegations-tennesse/73344/?bcsbid=cbc3bb6d-c4db-47db-956f-9041e6aaee6f&pbdialog=reg-wall-login-created-ftp>.

V. Putting Protection Back into the Horse Protection Act

When Congress passed the HPA more than 50 years ago, it did so with the intent of protecting horses from abuse. However, the current industry-run DQP program has fostered an arms race of sorts where increasingly stealth and harmful abuse is inflicted on horses while evading detection. This system of non-enforcement frustrates the very purpose of the HPA. One thing is clear, the will of Congress is not being realized under the current self-policing system. Horses are paying the price and suffering grievously under the current law. We applaud the House of Representatives for passing this prudent bill last in 2019 and we urge this Congress to enact the PAST Act to protect show horses from soring abuse.

To: Interested Parties
 From: Bob Meadow and Meryl O’Bryan
 Re: Recent Findings on Horse Slaughter for Human Consumptionⁱ
 Date: February 2022

A recent survey designed and fielded by Lake Research Partners found that adults overwhelmingly disapprove of (oppose) allowing American horses to be slaughtered for human consumption. High opposition to horse slaughter has remained extremely strong and stable since initial research on this matter was conducted 10 years ago, and opposition extends across every measurable demographic group. In an era of extreme political polarization, this is a unifying, consensus issue: **Americans are overwhelmingly opposed to horse slaughter.**



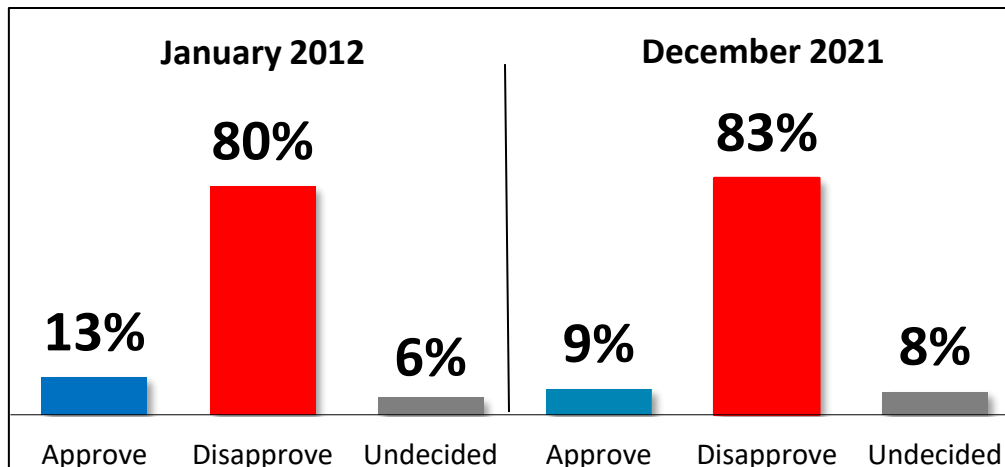
The major findings are as follows:

- **More than four in five adults indicate that they oppose allowing American horses to be slaughtered for human consumptionⁱⁱ. This opposition has remained strong and has even increased slightly since previous 2012 polling, using the same questionⁱⁱⁱ.** Eighty-three percent of adults oppose horse slaughter, with only nine percent approving of the practice. These numbers are slightly higher than in research conducted in 2012, when opposition was at 80% and approval was at 13%.

Lake Research Partners
 1101 17th St. NW,
 Suite 301
 Washington, DC 20036

Tel: 202.776.9066
 Fax: 202.776.9074

Partners
 Celinda Lake
 Alysia Snell
 David Mermin
 Daniel Gotoff
 Joshua Ulibarri
 Jonathan Voss



- **The overwhelming opposition to horse slaughter extends across every demographic group and crosses all partisan, regional, and gender lines. Finding 80% or more agreement on any issue position is rare in public opinion data, particularly in a polarized political environment.**
 - **Partisanship:**
 - Eighty-eight percent of Democrats, 82% of independents, and 78% of Republicans oppose slaughtering American horses for human consumption.
 - Similarly, 87% of adults who voted for Joe Biden in 2020 and 77% of adults who voted for Donald Trump oppose slaughtering American horses for human consumption.
 - **Region:**
 - Eighty-two percent of adults in the Northeast region, 81% of adults in the Midwest region, 83% of adults in the South region, 83% of adults in the South Central region, and 83% of adults in the West region oppose slaughtering American horses for human consumption.
 - Eighty-one percent of adults in farm or agricultural communities, rural areas, or small towns oppose slaughtering American horses for human consumption.
 - Eighty-four percent of adults living in western states with wild horses (Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming) oppose slaughtering American horses for human consumption.
 - **Gender:**
 - Eighty-eight percent of women and 76% of men oppose slaughtering American horses for human consumption.
- **Added to the strong opposition to horse slaughter, a majority of American adults also believe that policymakers in Washington, D.C. are not doing enough to protect animals.** Fifty-four percent of adults do not think policymakers are doing enough. Only 22% say they are doing the right amount, while a handful (5%) say they are doing too much, with the balance unsure.

In sum, American adults overwhelmingly oppose horse slaughter for human consumption, regardless of their political affiliation, whether they are Democrats, Republicans, or independents, whether they are rural or urban, young or old, men or women, or where they live. Additionally, Americans do not believe policymakers are doing enough to protect animals.

###

Appendix: Position on Horse Slaughter by Demographic Group

Demographic Group	Approve	Disapprove
TOTAL	9%	83%
Men	14%	76%
Women	5%	88%
Under Age 50	10%	82%
Ages 50 And Older	9%	83%
Self-Identified Democrats	7%	88%
Self-Identified Republicans	14%	78%
Self-Identified Independents	7%	82%
Biden Voters	7%	87%
Trump Voters	13%	77%
Registered Voters	10%	82%
Northeast Region	11%	82%
Midwest Region	12%	81%
South Region	8%	83%
South Central Region	8%	83%
West Region	7%	83%
Wild Horse Region	8%	84%
Farm or Agricultural Community/Rural Area/Small Town	12%	81%
Suburb	5%	86%
City	13%	80%

ⁱ Method 2021: Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey with 1,000 American adults. The survey was conducted over the Internet from a national sample of internet users. The nationwide survey was conducted December 7 – 12, 2021. The data were weighted slightly by gender, age, region, race, race and gender, party ID, education, children in household, pet ownership, community type, income type, and 2020 presidential vote choice. The margin of error for the total sample for the survey is +/-3.1% and larger for the sub-groups and split sample questions.

ⁱⁱ Would you say you approve or disapprove of allowing American horses to be slaughtered for human consumption?

ⁱⁱⁱ Method 2012: Lake Research Partners designed and administered this telephone survey, using professional interviewers, with 1,008 registered voters. The nationwide survey was conducted January 9-12, 2012. The margin of error for the total sample is +/-3.09 percentage points, and larger for sub-groups. The data were slightly weighted by gender, race, age, and region to ensure a comprehensive representation of registered voters in the U.S.



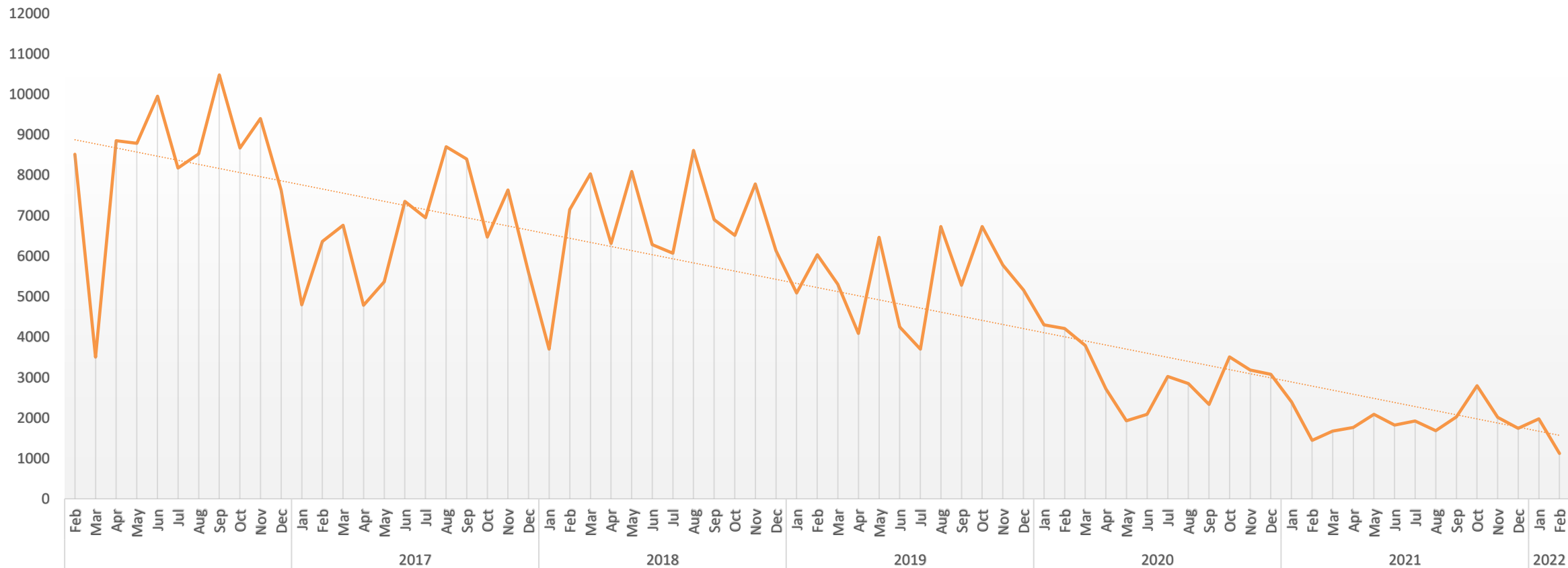
ASPCA.ORG

WE ARE THEIR VOICE.®

WE ARE THEIR VOICE.®

Number of Horses Transported for Slaughter Mexico and Canada, 1/1/2016 to 2/28/2022

Trend Line



Equine Slaughter Exports Chart

1980-2022 Year To Date ¹								
Horses Slaughtered in the U.S.				American Horses Exported for Slaughter				
Year	American Horses	Imported from Canada	Imported from Other Countries ²	Total	To Canada	To Mexico	Total	Total American Horses Slaughtered
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(8)
1980	N/A	N/A	N/A	274,500	N/A	N/A	N/A	274,500
1985	N/A	N/A	N/A	128,300	N/A	N/A	N/A	128,300
1990	344,385	250	1,065	345,700	68,086	N/A	N/A	345,700
1995	88,142	8,889	12,194	109,225	25,865	N/A	N/A	109,225
2000	40,324	3,217	3,593	47,134	24,315	N/A	N/A	47,134
2001	51,080	5,167	85	56,332	28,409	245	28,654	79,734
2002	40,407	1,843	62	42,312	25,219	774	25,993	66,400
2003	48,377	1,684	1	50,062	21,434	818	22,252	70,629
2004	60,078	6,105	0	66,183	19,725	4,114	23,839	83,917
2005	86,504	7,533	0	94,037	17,324	7,821	25,145	111,649
2006	101,123	3,776	0	104,899	21,709	11,080	32,789	133,912
2007	28,902	855	4	29,761	32,452	45,609	78,061	106,963
2008	0	0	0	0	42,232	56,731	98,963	98,963
2009	0	0	0	0	52,405	46,098	98,503	98,503
2010	0	0	0	0	53,803	52,862	106,665	106,665
2011	0	0	0	0	59,743	67,782	127,525	127,525
2012	0	0	0	0	55,781	110,791	166,572	166,572
2013	0	0	0	0	42,130	102,254	144,384	144,384
2014	0	0	0	0	40,410	105,784	146,194	146,194
2015	0	0	0	0	40,670	84,427	125,097	125,097
2016	0	0	0	0	29,700	77,046	106,746	106,746
2017	0	0	0	0	12,273	66,872	79,145	79,145
2018	0	0	0	0	10,568	71,005	81,573	81,573
2019	0	0	0	0	9,509	52,221	61,730	61,730
2020	0	0	0	0	5,520	30,081	35,601	35,601
2021	0	0	0	0	4,765	18,214	22,979	22,979
2022	0	0	0	0	907	4,525	5,432	5,432

¹2022 Year to Date = 20 weeks exports to Mexico. January-March exports to Canada.

²Germany, Mexico, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

Sources: Col. (2): Annual data from USDA FAS "Agricultural Import Aggregations and HS-10Digit Import Commodities" Commodity Codes 0101901010 & 0101190010 (Live Horses for Immediate Slaughter), weekly YTD data from USDA APHIS, "Canadian Live Animal Imports into the U.S. by Destination" (http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/WA_LS637.txt; Col. (3): USDA FAS "Agricultural Import Aggregations and HS-10Digit Import Commodities" Commodity Codes 0101901010 & 0101190010 (Live Horses for Immediate Slaughter); Col. (4): Annual data from USDA NASS, "Equine Slaughter," (<http://www.nass.usda.gov:8080/QuickStats/index2.jsp>); Col. (5): Statistics Canada annual subscription; Col. (6): USDA MNS, US to Mexico Weekly Livestock Export Summaries (http://www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/AL_LS635.txt)

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate

May 17, 2022

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader Schumer, and Leader McConnell:

We have come together to collectively and respectfully urge you to immediately move the Save America's Forgotten Equines (SAFE) Act (H.R. 3355/S. 2732) for a vote in order to protect the equine community in the United States. The funneling of American horses to slaughter for human consumption abroad is causing significant harm to the equine industry, adoption and rescue organizations, horse owners and enthusiasts, and the horses themselves. We all share the goal of advancing equine welfare; with Triple Crown Season well underway and public attention on equine sports, this is a critical moment for Congress to act to end a sad chapter of American history that has led to millions of horses being slaughtered.

We are pleased to share with you The Final Stretch Alliance to End Horse Slaughter – an innovative effort by equine industry and animal welfare organizations to enact a ban on horse slaughter. Racing industry groups have demonstrated real leadership in committing resources for aftercare and career transition programs, instituting and enforcing track policies against sale to slaughter, and spearheading state and federal policies prohibiting horse slaughter. These programs are critical, but until the law shuts down the slaughter pipeline itself, no horse, no matter how beloved or decorated, will be truly safe. For this reason, we have joined forces to call on Congress to pass the SAFE Act now.

Horses have not been slaughtered in this country since 2007 thanks to yearly Congressional action to ensure that no federal funds are used on this cruel practice. The American public overwhelmingly opposes horse slaughter and wants to see our nation's equines protected and treated humanely. Polling released this year found that a massive bipartisan majority – 83% of Americans – opposes horse slaughter. Export for slaughter has been diminishing, but thousands of equines still continue to be shipped across our borders each year for this purpose while this broadly supported, commonsense legislation languishes.

We are proud of the equine community's leadership in developing retraining and rehoming programs for horses and establishing safety-net services for horse owners in need. We are doing our part, but without action from Congress, we are fighting a losing battle. Congress must close the loophole that allows our nation's horses to slip through the cracks. For the sake of our horses, their owners, and the health and well-being of the equine industry itself, Congress must take the crucial step to end this unnecessary and harmful practice for good. Please pass the SAFE Act – our future is counting on it.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. We stand ready to help.

Sincerely,

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Animal Welfare Institute

Craig Bernick, Glen Hill Farm

Michael Blowen, Old Friends Equine

Breeders' Cup

Larry Collmus, NBC's Voice of Triple Crown

Del Mar Thoroughbred Club

Trevor Denman, Del Mar Racetrack announcer

Bo Derek, Actor/Equine Advocate

Dennis Drazin, Chairman/CEO Monmouth Park

Eclipse Thoroughbred Partners – Blue Moon Aftercare

Dr. Barrie Grant, Equine veterinarian

Humane Society of the United States

Humane Society Legislative Fund

Julie Krone, Hall of Fame Jockey

Richard Mandella, Hall of Fame Trainer

Maryland Horse Council

Graham Motion, Kentucky Derby winning trainer

Chris McCarron, Hall of Fame Jockey

New York Racing Association

Laffit Pincay, Jr., Hall of Fame Jockey

Return to Freedom Wild Horse Conservation

Mike Smith, Hall of Fame Jockey

Gary Stevens, Hall of Fame Jockey

Stronach Group

Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association

The Jockey Club

The Jockey's Guild

U.S. Trotting Association