

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chair  
Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable G.T. Thompson  
Chair  
Agriculture Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable David Scott  
Ranking Member  
Agriculture Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives

December 19, 2023

Dear Chair Stabenow, Chair Thompson, Ranking Member Boozman, and Ranking Member Scott:

We have come together to collectively and respectfully urge you to include the Save America's Forgotten Equines (SAFE) Act (H.R. 3475/S. 2037) in the upcoming Farm Bill 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 and we believe this is the right moment for Congress to act to bring an end to what has been a sad chapter of American history allowing the cruel slaughter of our horses.

We have joined forces as The Final Stretch Alliance to End Horse Slaughter – an innovative effort by equine industry and animal welfare organizations to propel a ban on horse slaughter. Racing industry groups have already 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 it is clear that 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 call on Congress to pass the SAFE Act now.

Horses have not been slaughtered in this country since 2007 thanks to longstanding Congressional action to ensure that no federal funds are used to enable domestic slaughter. Enacting a permanent, comprehensive ban on this unnecessary and harmful practice is consistent with the will of Congress. The American public also overwhelmingly opposes horse slaughter and wants to see our nation's equines protected and treated humanely. Recent polling 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 use this opportunity to include the SAFE Act in the Farm Bill – 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

The 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

Jockey's Guild

U.S. Trotting Association

Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority

United States Harness Racing Alumni Association