

# Veterinarians for Equine Welfare

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**TO: All Veterinary Practitioners in the U.S.**  
**RE: H.R. 503 and S. 311: The American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act**

Each year tens of thousands of horses are hauled all over the US for eventual slaughter in Mexico, Canada or even Japan. Injured, sick or healthy, young or old – all are subject to this cruel industry. However, now there is an opportunity to address this before the United States Congress.

In the House of Representatives, the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act (H.R. 503) has been introduced by Rep. Janice Schakowsky (D-IL), Rep. Ed Whitfield (R-KY), Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) and Rep. John Spratt (D-SC), while in the Senate it is sponsored by Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and veterinarian and US Senator John Ensign (R-NV). The AHSPA will ban the slaughter of horses for human consumption and prohibit live horses from being exported to Mexico, Canada, Japan or elsewhere for the purpose of slaughter. It will put an end to a barbaric practice that claims all breeds, ages, sizes and conditions of horse.

Opponents of the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act portray horse slaughter as a form of humane euthanasia, citing the American Veterinary Medical Association's classification of the captive-bolt as "acceptable" for euthanizing equines. This simplistic presentation of the facts fails to acknowledge the vast difference between efficient administration of the captive-bolt by a highly trained veterinarian with appropriate restraint of the horse's head (the AVMA specifies that the captive-bolt is acceptable "with appropriate restraint") and its improper use by low-skilled slaughterhouse employees without proper head restraint. Improper use of the captive-bolt during slaughter means that horses may often endure repeated blows with the device, and may be improperly stunned as they proceed through slaughter.

Further, this misrepresentation of the facts fails to recognize the immense suffering that horses endure *before they ever arrive at the slaughterhouse*. Federal regulations currently allow horses to be transported for more than 24 hours at a time without food, water or rest, on cattle trailers, with broken limbs, with eyes missing. These permitted conditions contrast sharply with generally-accepted practices for moving horses in a humane manner. Euthanasia of a horse by a licensed veterinarian is a far cry from the suffering faced by horses sent to slaughter, and it is disingenuous to suggest that the two are comparable simply because the mechanism by which horses are stunned at the slaughterhouse can, *in theory*, be humane.

We invite you to add your name to the growing list of veterinarians who are against the slaughter of American horses. To register your support for this bill, please fax the attached coupon to (703) 997-1134.

Our web site provides information about H.R. 503 and S. 311 (text of bill, list of co-sponsors, committees, facts, status, etc.): [www.vetsforequinewelfare.org](http://www.vetsforequinewelfare.org).

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**Yes**, please add my name to the growing list of veterinarians who want to see an end to the slaughter of America's horses for human consumption abroad through passage of the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act!

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title (DVM, VMD, PhD.)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tel:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_