



Illinoisans Oppose H.B. 4812 (Horse Slaughter Bill)

The majority of Illinois horse owners and residents reject horse slaughter. Those opposed to H. B. 4812 include:

Illinois Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association	Arlington Park Racetrack	ReRun
Illinois Thoroughbred Breeders and Owners Foundation	Hawthorne Racecourse	Exceller Fund
Illinois Harness Horsemen's Association	Fairmount Park	ASPCA
Illinois Horsemen's Benevolent Protective Association	Balmoral Park	Illinois Veterinarians
Hooved Animal Humane Society	Maywood Park	Homes for Horses Coalition
Illinois Equine Humane Center, NFP	Animal Welfare Institute	
C.A.N.T.E.R. (IL, MI, PA, OH, WV)	The Humane Society of the United States	
National Horse Protection Coalition	Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation	
Crosswinds Equine Rescue Center	Veterinarians for Equine Welfare	
Illinois horse farms and stables	Mid American Horse Rescue	

Reasons to oppose H. B. 4812:

Illinoisans overwhelmingly supported the ban on horse slaughter passed in 2007. Strong public support remains for keeping the ban in place.

It is unfortunate that the Illinois General Assembly and individuals from Illinois and around the country must continue dealing with this issue year after year, but we must remain vigilant against any and all attempts to overturn the 2007 ban on horse slaughter. It is a shame that our limited resources must be used to repeatedly engage in this fight, rather than expend the resources further protecting horses.

A repeal of the Illinois ban would subject thousands of horses to untold cruelty during transportation to slaughter, and during the slaughter process itself. Documents recently obtained (post the IL ban) under the Freedom of Information Act graphically reveal that horse slaughter - even when performed in U.S. based plants subject to U.S. welfare laws, result in horrific animal suffering. Documents which include hundreds of government photographs from one of the now-defunct horse slaughter plants show horses with severe cuts and gashes, with broken or missing legs, with eyeballs dangling from their sockets, and foals born at the slaughterhouse.

A repeal of the Illinois ban is in direct conflict with the Illinois Humane Care for Animals Act which clearly recognizes and protects horses as companion animals. Illinois horses are bred and raised for sport, pleasure, and recreational purposes and deserve the same protections from cruelty, abuse, and neglect as do dogs, cats, and other companion animals.

A repeal of the Illinois ban would once again subject the state and citizens of Illinois to untold environmental damage brought about by the horse slaughter industry's total disregard for state and local environmental laws. Throughout the course of its operations in DeKalb, the Cavel International horse slaughter plant was in constant violation of wastewater and other environmental regulations. Cavel remained a bad corporate citizen throughout the course of its existence in Illinois.

A repeal of the Illinois ban is in direct conflict with federal regulations which prohibit federal meat inspections at horse slaughter facilities. Absent federal inspectors there is currently no regulatory body in place to oversee adherence of the Federal Humane Slaughter of Animals Act or the Federal Meat Safety Inspection Act as is required by federal law. Furthermore, the federal ban renders it impossible for horsemeat producers to sell their product for human consumption in the U.S. or abroad.

A repeal of the Illinois ban would once again expose horsemeat consumers to health-related injuries associated with the consumption of meat derived from animals that are not specifically raised for human food. European Union horsemeat food safety directives issued in 2009-2010 highlight these risks and underscore the need to ensure that animals not specifically raised or medicated for use as human food are prohibited from entering the food-chain.