

February 15, 2010

**Illinois Equine Welfare Organization's Urge You to:  
Oppose HB 4812.**

Dear Legislators,

The following leaders of Illinois' equine welfare community write to you today in strong opposition to HB 4812.

“The Illinois Equine Humane Center (Elgin), C.A.N.T.E.R. (Northern Illinois), Field of Dreams Horse Rescue & Adoption (St. Charles), Hooved Animal Humane Society (Woodstock), Mid America Horse Rescue (Millstadt), and the Society for Hooved Animals Rescue and Emergency (Champaign) stand united in our opposition to HB 4812 or any other attempt to repeal the important ban on horse slaughter that was enacted in 2007.

We find it deeply disturbing that those seeking to profit from the sale of horsemeat are once again attempting to bring this cruel industry back to our state. Perhaps even more disturbing is the proposed “blood-money” clause that is included within this bill which calls for a fee of \$25 to be charged to the slaughterhouse for each horse slaughtered. The results of which would then be placed into a fund for eventual distribution to equine rescues for use in expanding their operations or for use in providing care to rescued horses.

We stand united in stating that none of our equine rescue organizations would ever accept a single penny from this fund. This is blood-money, pure and simple. We further state unequivocally, that no legitimate organization dedicated to equine welfare would ever accept money to save horses that was derived from the pain and suffering of other less fortunate horses.


Proponents of HB 4812 claim that as a direct result of the ban on horse slaughter, the incidence of equine abuse, neglect, and abandonment have increased in the past two years. As those who deal with cases of equine abuse and neglect on a daily basis, we strongly disagree with this assertion. We work with Illinois horse owners each and every day to help and educate them to better care and provide for their horses. The overwhelming concern we hear from horse owners is not the unavailability of horse slaughter, but rather the current economic stress facing nearly every sector of the American populace. In order to address these issues, the equine welfare community has been proactively implementing innovative programs and strategies to help horse owners cope in these trying times. Some of these new programs are as simple as helping horse owners to locate and purchase hay and feed at a lower cost, or assisting them with the costs of providing veterinarian administered humane euthanasia for their horse when they cannot afford to do so. We remain united in our resolve to implement additional humane solutions and we further remain united in our opposition to any attempted repeal of the


Illinois ban on horse slaughter.

In closing, the leaders of Illinois' equine welfare and rescue organizations strongly urge a "NO" vote on HB 4812.

Respectfully submitted by:


  
Gail Vance, President - Illinois Equine Humane Center, NFP  
(815) 476-5257

  
Denise Pundrey, Executive Director - CANTER Northern Illinois,  
(630) 341-1582

  
Sue Balla, President - Field of Dreams Horse Rescue & Adoption  
(815) 762-1983

  
Dr. Patti Klein-Manka, Executive Director - Hooved Animal Humane Society  
(815) 227-3569

  
Margo Burke, President - Mid America Horse Rescue, NFP (314) 302-2216

  
Linda Hewardine, President - Society for Hooved Animal Rescue and Emergency  
(217) 360-2760