[DATE]

The Honorable (Senator’s Name)

United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

OR The Honorable (Representative’s Name)

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator or Congressman or Congresswoman (Name):

I am writing to urge you to support the bipartisan legislation introduced by U.S. Representatives Vern Buchanan and Jan Schakowsky to permanently ban the slaughter of American horses. The Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act would also prohibit what has become perhaps the cruelest consequence of the shuttering of equine slaughterhouses in America: the inhumane transport of live horses to Mexican and Canadian slaughterhouses.

American blues musician Elizabeth Cotten once said: “Through the days of love and celebration and joy, and through the dark days of mourning...the faithful horse has been with us always.”

Horses were never meant to be food. They were brought to America to help forge this great nation. As we laud the explorer who discovered every nook and cranny of this land, should we not also revere the loyal partner that carried its trusted human across the wild frontier?

Beyond the statistic – more than 100,000 horses are exported to slaughter each year – is the terror and abuse suffered by each and every horse before it ever gets its turn with the bolt gun. More than 90,000 of the horses bound for slaughter are healthy and able to live productive lives. Most are discarded by owners who unwittingly condemn them to horrific deaths.

Congress understood the horse’s sentience and historical significance when it shuttered the inhumane equine slaughter industry; yet unknowingly left them vulnerable to even worse abuse, neglect and cruelty. The dirty little secret is that closing slaughterhouses didn’t end slaughter. It abdicated the responsibility of ensuring humane treatment of our horses to foreign governments and gave birth to an unregulated slaughter pipeline where criminals and charlatans prey upon good-hearted rescuers and donors and abuse horses with impunity.

Now, rather than being dumped at the inhumane slaughterhouse just up the road, an unwanted horse suffers weeks or months of abuse, starvation and exploitation before it ever enters the death chute of an inhumane foreign slaughterhouse. The horse that faithfully trusted and served throughout its life – was fed, sheltered, given aid when it was sick or injured – is now thrust into an inhumane auction cycle where it’s electrically prodded and whipped into crowded trailers and pens and forced to fight to survive. Most receive little or no food or water and no veterinary care from the time they’re initially offered at auction to the time they’re executed. Babies, pregnant, elderly, sick, infectious, injured, trained, feral – all crammed together while they’re peddled on Facebook for 10 to 100 times their auction price. Those that fail to fetch a profit make the days-long journey to hell. They’ve suffered an eternity by the time they become part of the statistic.

Please finish what Congress started. Support the SAFE Act and safeguard America’s horses, once and for all.

Sincerely,