



August 14, 2023

The Honorable Senator Mitt Romney
354 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
<https://www.romney.senate.gov/contact-senator-romney/>

VIA INTERNET SUBMISSION
VIA FIRST CLASS MAIL

Re: The Save America's Forgotten Equines (SAFE) Act (H.R. 3475)

Dear Senator Romney:

I am writing as a citizen of Utah, voter, constituent, and on behalf of Liberty Sanctuary, located in Heber City, Wasatch County, Utah, to encourage your support for The Save America's Forgotten Equines (SAFE) Act (H.R. 3475) (the "SAFE Act"). The SAFE Act was recently referred to the Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry, a copy of which can be found at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/3475?loclr=cga-bill>.

Apart from perhaps the bald eagle, there is no other animal that is so intertwined with our country's history and a more powerful symbol of our freedom and American values than the horse. As part of the American frontier born of pioneer stock, there are few states whose success and heritage was built more on the humble backs of horses than Utah.

Personally, I am the proud owner of four companion horses and have a deep regard for equines. I am also a practicing attorney and volunteer board member of Liberty Sanctuary, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation whose mission is to rescue and rehabilitate American equines from the slaughter pipeline. To be sure, we are practical businessmen and women, not wild horse activists. We simply recognize that killing American equines for meat is wrong, morally, economically, and politically.

The all-volunteer Liberty Sanctuary currently has 16 equines on site at its 80-acre ranch in Wasatch County rescued from kill pens in Texas and Colorado. These equines were slated to be dumped over the border to Mexico and Canada, where they would have been mercilessly killed using indescribably cruel practices and their meat shipped to foreign countries, some of whom are our adversaries, like Russia and China.

Approximately **20,000 innocent American horses per year** are swept up by the kill industry to face this appalling fate. According to the USDA, more than 92% of those are healthy and capable

of living full lives, and many are young and even pregnant. Not surprisingly, 82% of American voters according to the latest polls *strongly oppose* horse slaughter. Consistent with public opinion, Liberty Sanctuary advocates for these animals—who cannot speak up for themselves—by supporting common sense legislation like the SAFE Act.

The SAFE Act is a bipartisan bill, introduced as an amendment to legislation already protecting dogs and cats (The Dog and Cat Meat Trade Prohibition Act of 2018, added to the 2018 Farm Bill). It adds two simple words to this legislation: “or equine.” Nothing else. There is no logical reason to not extend the same protection to equines. This is simple common sense, and, moreover, American and Utah voters agree.

Americans view horses as icons of freedom, not food. Congress rightfully defunded USDA slaughter inspections in 2006, so killing horses in the U.S. has been functionally prohibited for 17 years. If it is wrong to kill American horses in the U.S., then it is even more wrong to force them to endure 30 hours of packed transport for slaughter in Canada or Mexico. This is a simple message that is easily understood by, and resonates with, Utahns.

The opposition’s arguments, on the other hand, are few and lack substance. First and foremost, some oppose the SAFE Act to appease the cattle and ranching lobbies, which have long complained of wild horses on grazing lands. As you know, this can be a concern in Utah given the sprawling BLM lands here. The vast majority of the slaughter population, however, is comprised of domestic horses, not wild mustangs. There is no evidence that ending equine butchery will materially increase the number of wild horses on public lands or interfere with ranching rights.

Other alarmists suggest, without support, that eliminating slaughter will unmanageably increase the general horse population. There are, however, already assistance and safety net programs across the nation to assist struggling horse owners care for their horses, and Liberty Sanctuary is actively working to streamline the process for owners in need. Once slaughter is prohibited, sanctuaries can focus on rescuing and caring for animals instead of using resources to outbid kill buyers at auctions. Currently, sanctuaries compete against a black market that devalues the equine to the pound for meat and, sometimes, far worse. Horses are starved to death in quarantine for financial gain and even used as drug mules to be killed at delivery. We fail to understand how saving equines from these barbaric practices can be credibly characterized as a negative outcome.

Finally, opposing arguments about economic consequences are even more dubious. Horse slaughter consists of a tiny network of shady kill buyers, auction yards, kill-pen operators, and dealers, which generate no material value or jobs to the U.S. economy. By contrast, as the attached data demonstrates, preserving the lives of horses will have a far greater and positive economic impact in this country. Frankly, protecting the American equine is the right thing to do.

We sincerely hope Utah’s delegates will be on the right side of this issue. Our experience suggests the primary reason the SAFE Act has not passed already is due to a lack of public awareness. When asked, most people are shocked to learn that horse slaughter occurs and horrified to know that

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young and healthy American horses are sent over the border to be hoisted up, cut, and killed and their meat parceled out to satisfy the appetites of high-end diners in China and elsewhere.

To that end, Liberty Sanctuary is the preeminent voice of these equines in Utah—the voice of justice and fairness. The public is taking note as we have been featured in [local media](#) since launching officially this summer (e.g., Salt Lake Tribune, Fox 13 News, Good Things Utah, Good Day Utah, and more). We will continue to work to develop solutions and to bring this crisis to the public's attention. We invite you to become part of the solution for our horse-loving state.

We recognize that some of Utah's past delegates have garnered a reputation of opposing equine-related causes, but not all issues are the same. We respectfully invite you for a private visit, as your schedule permits, to Liberty Sanctuary so you can meet our rescues and learn of our plans to help move the issue forward sensibly. We would also be delighted to host you for a working lunch. You may contact Debra West, our founder, any time at debra@libertysanctuary.org or 435-625-1100.

The slaughter pipeline is inhumane at all stages and rife with documented, systematic abuse. Collecting horses for slaughter for human consumption is a predatory, inhumane enterprise by any measure, and it must be stopped. That is our goal. We hope to welcome you in person to our rescue operation and that we can count on your support to successfully pass the SAFE Act in the 118th Congress. For all America's Forgotten Equines, we ask that you not actively oppose the legislation at the very least.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and devotion and service to our country.

Sincerely,



Joshua D. Jewkes

Enclosure (1)

cc: Debra West, Founder, Liberty Sanctuary

THE POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PRESERVING HORSES V.S. SLAUGHTERING THEM

July 2023

Preserving the lives of horses in the United States has a far greater economic impact than slaughtering them for a one-time minimal profit.

Horse owners continually contribute to various sectors, such as big and small business, tourism, and for-profit recreation. The horse industry also provides diverse employment opportunities, making equine preservation the right choice for sustained economic growth.

REVENUE: EXPORTING HORSES TO SLAUGHTER IN CANADA AND MEXICO

- Horses exported for slaughter in Mexico receive \$1.55 and \$1.75 per pound per horse, which averages to \$1.65¹
- Horses exported for slaughter in Canada is \$4.54 and \$6.80 per pound per horse, which averages to \$5.67²
- Average horses weigh between 900-1200 lbs, with average of 1050 lbs.³

Horses shipped to slaughter in Mexico in 2022 was 16,362 ⁴ Average price per pound \$1.65	Horses shipped to slaughter in Canada in 2022 was 3627 Average price per pound \$5.67
\$1.65 per pound x 1050 lb average horse weight x 16,362 horses = \$1,732.50 per horse Total revenue 2022: Mexico Approximately: \$28,347,165	\$5.67 per pound x 1050 average horse weight x 3,627 horses = \$5,953.50 per horse Total revenue 2022: Canada Approximately: \$21,593,344.50

¹[https://www.selinawamucii.com/insights/prices/mexico/horse-meat/#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20the%20approximate%20wholesale,1.23%20per%20pound\(lb\).](https://www.selinawamucii.com/insights/prices/mexico/horse-meat/#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20the%20approximate%20wholesale,1.23%20per%20pound(lb).)

² <https://www.selinawamucii.com/insights/prices/canada/horse-meat/>

³<https://horserookie.com/how-much-do-horses-weigh/#:~:text=Frequently%20Asked%20Questions,Q%3A%20How%20much%20does%20an%20average%20horse%20weigh%3F,horse%20weighs%20900%2D2%2C000%20pounds.>

⁴ <https://awionline.org/content/horse-slaughter-statistics>

Total revenue from exporting American horses to Mexico and Canada for slaughter in 2022 was approximately: \$49,940,509,50.

THE POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PRESERVING HORSES

American horses exported to Mexico for slaughter receive an average price of \$1,732.50 per horse, while those sold to Canada receive an average of \$5,953.50 per horse. However, the cost of owning a horse amounts to approximately \$7,896 year after year.⁵

Horse Type	Annual Ownership Cost (2016)	Annual Ownership Cost (2021)	Percentage Change ⁶
Recreational Horse	\$6,710	\$7,896	+16%
Showhorse	\$24,239	\$28,524	+16%

Here is an overview of horse ownership costs in approximate ranges.

Cost Type	Monthly Cost	Annual Cost
Board ⁷	\$100-600	\$1,200-\$7,200
Feed ⁸	\$20-\$365	\$250-\$4,380
Veterinary ⁹	\$16-\$30	\$200-\$350
Farrier ¹⁰	\$10-\$84	\$120-\$1,000
Training ¹¹	\$400-\$700	\$4,800-\$8,400

⁵ <https://datapaddock.com/cost-of-owning-a-horse-in-the-us-2003-versus-2016-ahc/>

⁶ The original cost of owning a recreational horse was \$12,948 (29) in 2016. The inflation-adjusted cost of owning a recreational horse in December 2021 was \$7,896.31. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Inflation Calculator. [Link](#)

⁷ <https://swingindhorserescue.com/horses-are-expensive/>

⁸ <https://swingindhorserescue.com/horses-are-expensive/>

⁹ <https://swingindhorserescue.com/horses-are-expensive/>

¹⁰ <https://swingindhorserescue.com/horses-are-expensive/>

¹¹ <https://swingindhorserescue.com/horses-are-expensive/>

THE HORSE INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTES \$122 BILLION ANNUALLY TO THE US ECONOMY.¹²

Additional horse expenses are tack and equipment, clothing, grooming tools, shows, rodeos and outings, supplemental vitamins, wormers, medicine and unseeable other costs.

Large, medium and small businesses supply equestrians with what they need and employ thousands of people nationwide.

Total Value Added to U.S. Economy	Direct Contribution Goods and Services	Total Employment Impact	Direct Employment Impact
\$122 Billion	\$50 Billion	\$38 Billion	988,394

The horse industry produces goods and services of \$50 billion as a direct economic impact on the U.S. economy.

Additionally, the industry contributes \$38 billion in direct wages, salaries, and benefits.

This economic contribution directly affects other sectors in the economy and by combining these effects, the estimated total contribution of the horse industry to the U.S. economy is \$122 billion annually.

2.3 MILLION AMERICANS WANT TO ADOPT HORSES¹³

Adoption organizations¹⁴ have been increasing across the U.S. and many existing ones are increasing their capacity. Fewer and fewer horses are going to slaughter, and a massive number of homes exist for at-risk equines in the U.S. Equine rescues.

A peer-reviewed 2017 publication revealed data from Edge Research, shows that 2.3 million Americans have the resources and the desire to adopt a horse right now. This

¹² <https://horsecouncil.org/resources/2017-economic-impact-study-facts/>

¹³ <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/7/7/53>

¹⁴ <https://homesforhorses.org>

data demonstrates that the challenge is not about creating homes, but about matching them with horses in need.

SUMMARY:

Preserving the lives of horses has a substantial annual economic impact of \$122 billion, whereas slaughtering horses brings in a comparatively modest sum of approximately \$50 million annually and the numbers of horses going to slaughter continues to decrease year after year.

There are over 450 known rescues in the U.S. and that number is increasing, along with 2.3 million households who want to adopt a horse right now.

Therefore, considering the substantial economic benefits and the desire for horse ownership, it makes sense to save a horse rather than slaughter one for a single profit.