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## **Texas attempting to roll back anti-horsemeat regulations under a smoke screen of denial??**

Attention: All horse slaughter opponents

Representative Cain, the head of the Texas Agriculture Committee, has introduced HB-3419 which is scheduled for a vote on Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>. The bill would simply repeal Ag Code Subsection 149.004(4). This is a single subsection of Code 149 that regulates the transportation of horsemeat. Other subsections deal with its sale and storage.

Code Section 149 was created in 1949 at the behest of the cattle, pork and sheep packers with the intent of preventing horsemeat from being comingled with beef and other meats. The provision was discovered by the late Mary Nash during the early effort to drive out the horse Beltex and Dallas Crown slaughter plants in Texas. Though originally intended to prevent comingling, it was realized that the Code effectively banned meaningful commerce in horsemeat, and that the slaughterhouses had been operating illegally for decades.

When horse slaughter was stopped nationwide by the defunding of federal inspections, the slaughter plants were already facing the threat of this violation as well as environmental challenges. With all this pressure, the plants closed causing Mexico and Canada to become the destination of American horses destined for slaughter. The net result has been a steady reduction of the slaughter of American horses. Last year, 32,411 horses went to slaughter with over half going to Mexican plants.

EWA contacted Mr. Cain's office to inquire about the purpose of this attempt. We were told essentially that there was nothing to see here. To our knowledge there is only one business that is currently violating Code 149.004(4), and that is the Port of Houston. Containers of horsemeat arriving from Mexican ports are apparently transferred to other ships to reach their destinations.

Cain's office denied any connection between the port and this legislation, but it is interesting to note that the port is in Rep. Cain's district. Authorities in Texas have been reluctant to address potential violations at the port, especially in light of the fact that the EU has banned horsemeat from Mexico over health concerns, causing the traffic of horsemeat through the port to decline in recent years.

EWA will keep our members informed of the developments of HB3419, and potentially will be requesting constituents of Texas to contact their representatives, if HB3419 moves out of committee to the entire legislature for a floor vote. We will provide you with member information and names at a later date.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Holland". The signature is stylized and cursive.

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