

URGENT ALERT
HB 1324 MOVES TO SENATE
***THIS BILL WILL *DECRIMINALIZE* HORSE SLAUGHTER IN TEXAS**
FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION*

Status

Last week, despite overwhelming constituent opposition to the slaughter of American horses for human consumption overseas, HB 1324 was voted favorably out of the House with a record vote of 81 Yeas to 53 Nays. Although the bill passed, the number of “no” votes is significant in reflecting the fact that MANY representatives heard from their constituents and many voted as requested. In fact, dozens of the legislative offices reported receiving “*hundreds* of faxes, calls, and letters in opposition to this bill”.

Now, we must work much harder and make sure that all 31 Senate offices receive *thousands* of calls, faxes, and letters in opposition! There is no question we are up against “special interests” and well paid lobbyists, but that does not mean we cannot defeat this bill.

Background

Texas has the only two horse slaughter plants in the United States. Last August, then Texas Attorney General John Cornyn ruled that they are operating in direct violation of Chapter 149 of the Agriculture Code which makes it a criminal offense to sell, possess or transfer horse meat for human consumption. These two Texas plants, both foreign owned, slaughter live horses, process their meat, and ship it to France, Belgium, Germany and Japan for human consumption in those countries.

Prior to the Attorney General ruling, the plants had avoided prosecution under these sections based on their erroneous contention that Chapter 149 did not apply if the human consumption took place outside the United States. In response to the Attorney General ruling, **HB 1324 was introduced to change the current law to make the criminal offenses in Chapter 149 applicable only if the human consumption occurs in the United States; thus, decriminalizing the current illegal activities of these horse slaughter plants.**

Points and Counterpoints

- Contrary to the proponents’ claims, **the vast majority of horses slaughtered in these Texas plants are not old, sick or lame but instead are young, healthy horses** bought by “killer buyers” who attend horse auctions where they compete with families and other horse brokers looking for good, sound horses. A French butcher was quoted as saying: “I only buy American meat, which is red and firm. In butchering terms we call it ‘well-structured’, the best you can get”. This type of meat doesn’t come from old, sick or injured horses. Also, **horse slaughter promotes horse theft - horse theft decreased by over 50% in California after California banned horse slaughter in 1998.**
- Contrary to the proponents’ claims, the **elimination of horse slaughter will not increase horse abuse or neglect; nor will it increase the export of live horses to Mexico and Canada.** The number of slaughtered horses in the U.S. has decreased from 360,000 annually in 1990 to 42,000 in 2002 and, according to a recently published study commissioned by The Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation, no increase in abuse or neglect has occurred, nor has the export of live horses to Mexico or Canada increased.
- Contrary to the proponents’ claims, current law does not prohibit the killing of horses for medical purposes, pet food or any other use other than human consumption.
- Proponents of HB 1324 point to the economic impact of closing these slaughter plants. According to court records, Beltex employs approximately 90 and Dallas Crown approximately 40, minimum wage, high turn over, migrant workers. These jobs can easily be absorbed. Also, the “lost profits” to the Texas economy will be minimal since these foreign owned plants siphon their profits overseas. Further, **ninety percent (90%) of the horses slaughtered in these plants are transported from other parts of the United States and the money paid by these**

plants for those horses to out-of-state “killer buyers” does not stay in Texas. A live horse is worth much more to the Texas economy than a dead horse. The direct annual impact on the gross domestic product is approximately \$4,200 per horse.

- **The transportation of horses to slaughter houses is cruel and inhumane.** Horses are often transported in overcrowded double decked cattle trucks which prevents them from standing upright causing severe head, back and neck injuries. Horses are often trucked for days with no food, water or rest.
- **The slaughter method used to kill these horses is anything but humane.** The 2002 report of the American Veterinarian Medical Association states "adequate restraint is important to ensure proper placement of the penetrating captive bolt" when used for euthanasia of horses. "Adequate restraint" on a fractious, frightened horse in a slaughter plant killing 160 horses a day is virtually impossible. These horses often endure repeated stuns or blows and remain conscious during their own slaughter.
- Also point out that many major horse organizations are opposed to this bill such as: the National Thoroughbred Racing Association, The Breeders Cup Limited, Fasig-Tipton Horse Sales Company, and the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation to name a few.

What You Can Do

HB 1324 has been assigned to the Agriculture and Livestock subcommittee of the Natural Resources Committee. **Immediately** contact every member of the Senate Natural Resources Committee (their contact information is listed below) and get ***every person and group you know to do the same***. Tell the Committee members that you are OPPOSED to HB 1324. Using the talking points above, tell them that you do not want our horses slaughtered for the benefit of the French, Belgians, and Japanese. **Please be courteous with all of your communications.**

Committee Contact Information

The Senate Natural Resource Committee Members and their contact information are as listed below. The members of the Subcommittee on Agriculture are Senators Duncan (Chair), Estes, and Lucio.

Senator	Telephone	Fax	Room
Kenneth Armbrister, Chair	(512) 463-0118	(512) 475-3736	1E.14
Mike Jackson, Vice-Chair	(512) 463-0111	(512) 475-3727	E1.806
Gonzalo Barrientos	(512) 463-0114	(512) 463-5949	3E.18
Robert Duncan	(512) 463-0128	(512) 463-2424	3E.12
Troy Fraser	(512) 463-0124	(512) 475-3732	1E.15
Juan Hinojoso	(512) 463-0120	(512) 463-0229	GE.5
Jon Lindsay	(512) 463-0107	(512) 463-8810	E1.606
Eddie Lucio, Jr.	(512) 463-0127	(512) 463-0061	GE.4
Florence Shapiro	(512) 463-0108	(512) 463-7579	3E.2
Todd Staples	(512) 463-0103	(512) 463-1526	E1.708
Craig Estes	(512) 463-0130	(512) 463-8874	3E.8

The mailing address for all Senators is: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station, Austin, TX 78711.

Questions? Texas Humane Legislation Network 1-888-548-6263 or www.thln.com.

ACT TODAY. TIME IS EXTREMELY SHORT

