



# Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

August 7, 2003

## It Shouldn't Take a Champion To save A Life

Dear Colleague:

While "Seabiscuit" captures the hearts of moviegoers across the nation, tens of thousands of horses from all over the United States are being brutally slaughtered in two foreign-owned slaughter plants operating in violation of Texas law. These plants slaughter horses and ship their meat to France, Belgium, and Japan where it is eaten as a delicacy.

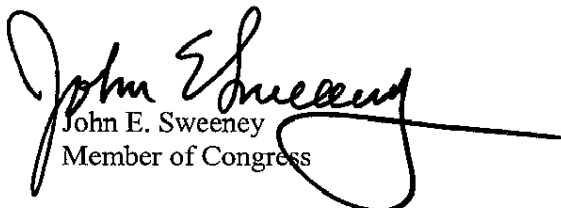
Seabiscuit's tale is not that uncommon for many horses today; awkward, knobby-kneed, overweight and unwanted. If not for three men who believed in him, he could have met the fate that awaits tens of thousands of horses of each year in the slaughterhouse. In fact, just recently the racing community was shocked to learn Ferdinand, the 1986 Kentucky Derby winner and 1987 Horse of the Year, was slaughtered in a Japanese slaughterhouse.


Few people are aware horses are slaughtered in the US and even fewer understand the cruelty involved. From auction house to slaughterhouse, horses of all breeds, ages and health are cruelly treated and abused. Slaughter is **NOT** an alternative to humane euthanasia by a qualified veterinarian, as some would like you to believe. Euthanasia, according to an article written by Dr. Sean Bowman, in the February 22, 2003, issue of *The Blood-Horse*, "is an induction to anesthesia, just like for surgery, but the veterinarian continues to overdose. The horses are not afraid; there is no fear of anticipation."

Horses are sensitive, affectionate, human-loving creatures that work and run their hearts out to please us. They deserve to live out their lives under the care and protection of responsible owners who will afford them a peaceful, dignified death through humane euthanasia when the time comes. To spend the final days of their lives, possibly as a result of injury, crammed into cattle trailers, denied food and water for long periods of time, put through hours of immeasurable fear and panic, and then whipped and prodded into a kill shoot to be brutally slaughtered is truly unconscionable.

As we celebrate the life of Seabiscuit and mourn the death of Ferdinand, I urge you to join me in cosponsoring the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act (**H.R. 857**). This bill will ensure no horse, be they great champion or riding school pony, will suffer to satisfy the demand for this delicacy.

If you are interested or need further information, please contact Jenn Burg in Congressman Sweeney's office at 225-5614 or Joe Harris in Congressman Spratt's office at 225-5501.

  
John E. Sweeney  
Member of Congress

  
John Spratt  
Member of Congress