

Animal Welfare, Racing Groups Join Katherine Heigl in Demanding that President Biden Halt Slaughter of American Equines

Prime Minister Trudeau recently spoke out against horse slaughter, and American groups and famed American actress ask Biden to speak up, too

WASHINGTON DC, UNITED STATES, October 24, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Actress Katherine Heigl joined Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy, along with several leading horse racing organizations in sending a letter to the White House today, demanding that President Joe Biden work to halt live exports of thousands of American horses for slaughter for human consumption. They noted that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called for an end to Canada's role in exporting draft horses to Japan for slaughter and asked that Biden address America's gruesome trade of equines to Mexico. The U.S. also sends a smaller number of horses to Canada, which itself has two remaining horse slaughter plants.



Countless horses face grim fates every year because the U.S. still allows their transport across borders for slaughter. The SAFE Act will protect them.

“

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*James Gagliano, president of
The Jockey Club*

Former Congressman and National Thoroughbred Racing Association Tom Rooney, Jockey Club President James Gagliano, and New York Racing Association president and CEO David O'Rourke aligned with animal protection groups in urging Biden to do something about America's biggest horse welfare problem.

“As a U.S. Senator and as Vice President, you opposed

horse slaughter,” the letter reads. “Yet, your Administration has been silent on this trade. I do hope that Prime Minister Trudeau's outspoken work on this subject reminds you that this subject

is worthy of the attention of all North American heads of state.”

[The letter is available here.](#)

Bipartisan support is building in Congress for the Save America’s Forgotten Equines (SAFE) Act, H.R. 3475 and S. 2037. Those measures, led by Reps. Vern Buchanan, R-Fla, and Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., and Sens. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., would also permanently codify a domestic ban on horse slaughter that has annually renewed for the last 15 years. More importantly, the SAFE Act would halt live exports of about 20,000 equines for slaughter in Mexico and Canada.

While the last of the U.S.’s slaughter plants were shuttered in 2007, thousands of American equines are funneled to Mexico and Canada where they are killed and butchered and then shipped to Europe and Asia for consumption. In 2022, though, there were 20,000 horses shipped to Mexico and Canada for slaughter, down from 140,000 a decade ago.

“Elderly, sick, blind, and lame horses, heavily pregnant mares, small ponies, and aggressive stallions are all crammed onto trailers for a horrific journey to foreign meat plants. Horses and other equines are neglected and abused at every turn of this winding journey,” the letter to the president reads.

“If it’s wrong to slaughter American horses on U.S soil, it’s wrong to stain Mexican or Canadian soil with the blood of American horses, too,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of the Center for a Humane Economy. “Our investigations show that the trafficking of live horses for slaughter for human consumption has been in a steep decline, but 20,000 horses still experience terror and butchery for no good reason.”

“It’s time to make all of North America a Safe Zone for American horses,” added Pacelle.

“The Jockey Club has long sought a ban on the export of horses for slaughter and we urge the Biden administration to take the necessary steps to protect horses from being butchered for very isolated pockets of Old-World consumers interested in horse meat,” declared James Gagliano, president of The Jockey Club, the breed registry for Thoroughbreds. “The Thoroughbred industry is united in calling for this reform.”

The SAFE Act amends the 2018 Dog and Cat Meat Trade Prohibition Act, which banned the trade in dog and cat meat for human consumption, by adding the words “or equines,” thus ensuring that our three most treasured animal companion species – dogs, cats, and horses – are protected from foreign interests that regard them as little more than a food commodity, the letter to the president explains.

“This trade in horses for slaughter is perhaps America’s most reviled form of structural cruelty to equines,” added Scott Beckstead, director of campaigns for Animal Wellness Action and an

Oregon Racing Commissioner. "The President and his USDA have a chance to close out this debate and what is widely considered a morally settled matter."

ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. X: @AWAction_News

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. X: @TheHumaneCenter

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