Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 3, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chair Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Member Granger,

As negotiations for the final Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations bills continue, we write in strong support for continued restriction on the use of taxpayer funds for horse slaughter operations in the United States. This provision was included in both the House Fiscal Year 2021 agriculture appropriations bill and the administration's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Request. This is a continuation of overwhelmingly popular policy that has been in place each year since Fiscal Year 2014 and for all but two years since 2005. This provision is necessary to stop the return of the predatory horse slaughter industry in America.
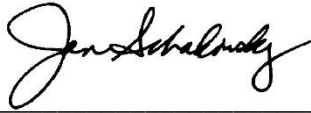
At a time when Congress faces difficult budgetary decisions to help Americans through this unprecedented crisis, expending limited funds to bolster a foreign owned and driven industry that our own citizens broadly oppose should not be one of them. Horse slaughter is an inherently cruel practice that 80% of Americans want to see permanently banned.

Beyond fiscal concerns, flesh from American horses is not fit for human consumption. Equines are not considered food animals in the U.S. and therefore are not raised under the regulatory restrictions of animals used for that purpose. Throughout their lives, they routinely receive drugs and medications that are specifically banned by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in food animals due to their toxicity to humans.

We support legislation to permanently ban the slaughter of American horses for human consumption in the U.S., and their export for that purpose abroad. Until that legislation becomes law it is essential that Congress ensure that horse slaughter plants do not open in the U.S. – a very real possibility if this funding restriction is not included in the final Appropriations bill.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge that you maintain current law and include Sec. 739 of H.R. 7608 in the final Fiscal Year 2021 agriculture appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

_____
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

_____
Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress

_____
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

_____
John Katko
Member of Congress

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