



# Animal Welfare Institute

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## PLEASE SUPPORT HB 4162, HUMANE TRANSPORT OF HORSES

### *Introduction:*

HB 4162 will amend the Humane Care for Animals Act so that no person may transport any equidae in a vehicle or trailer containing 2 or more levels, one on top of the other. **AWI supports this bill.**

### *Background:*

In October 2007, a double-deck tractor trailer carrying 59 Belgian draft horses through Wadsworth, IL “blew through a stop light at Route 41 and Wadsworth Road and struck another vehicle” according to local police on the scene of the accident. The crash, so severe, resulted in more than 5 hours of suffering before authorities could free the horses from the mangled truck. Sadly, nine horses died on the scene with another six dying later because of injuries sustained during the tragedy.

Accidents such as this are not uncommon. Only one year earlier, a double-deck truck hauling 41 horses to slaughter at the Cavel International slaughterhouse in DeKalb, IL crashed (pictured). This tragic incident resulted in the death of 16 horses. Similar scenarios have occurred elsewhere in the United States.

Not only is it unsafe to haul horses in double-deck trailers, but it is inhumane, a point on which humane organizations, veterinary associations and even the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agree. According to the USDA:



*Double-deck trailers do not provide adequate headroom for equines, with the possible exception of foals and yearlings. We do not believe that trailers that have two or more permanent levels that are not collapsible can be adequately altered to accommodate adult equines, especially tall equines. A tall equine can be 8 feet tall to the top of its head when standing on all four legs and close to 12 feet tall when rearing.*

*We acknowledge that double-deck trailers can carry more equines and other livestock than single-deck trailers.... We do not believe that equines can be safely and humanely transported on a conveyance that has an animal cargo space divided into two or more stacked levels. (9 CFR Parts 70 and 88).*

Illinois has become the leader when it comes to protecting equines from abuse and neglect. Just last year the Illinois General Assembly overwhelmingly passed legislation banning the slaughter of horses for human consumption. Sadly, although horses can no longer be slaughtered in Illinois, the middlemen known as “killer buyers” working for Cavel continue to buy horses from across the US. The horses are shipped to Mexico and Canada for slaughter, often passing through Illinois en route to Cavel’s plant in Canada or plants in Mexico. The preferred method of transporting horses to slaughter remains the double-deck truck, a two-tiered trailer designed for other livestock such as cattle and hogs. Use of the conveyances to transport horses is cruel and dangerous. **H.B. 4162 would eliminate their use for hauling horses in Illinois.**

### *Facts:*

- Double-deck trailers are designed for livestock such as cattle and hogs, not horses.
- The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has “reviewed limited data within the scientific literature that suggest increased rates of injury associated with the use of double-decked conveyances for transporting horses.”
- Again, according to the AVMA “sources, such as the National Agriculture Safety Database and various manufacturers producing trailers specifically for horse transport recommend heights of 7 to 8 ft as being necessary for the safe and comfortable transport of horses (i.e., adequate headroom for the horses to stand comfortably with their heads in normal position); it appears difficult, if not impossible, to meet such recommendations via the use of currently configured double-deck trailers, particularly for taller horses.”
- The US Department of Agriculture opposes the transport of horses on double-deck trailers and is currently in the process of prohibiting their use completely under the agency’s regulations governing the transport of equines to slaughter.
- Killer-buyers continue to use these trucks while passing through Illinois on their way to slaughterhouses in Canada and Mexico.

The State of Illinois has made clear its intolerance for the horse slaughter industry by shutting its sole plant down. HB 4162 will ensure the companies still buying horses and shipping them through Illinois to slaughter in Canada and Mexico can no longer use the horribly inhumane double-deckers. **Please join Representatives JoAnn Osmond, Bob Molaro and many of your colleagues in support of this important legislation.** For more information, please contact Chris Heyde at 703-836-4300.