

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 27, 2015

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 129
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 190
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Moran, and Ranking Member Merkley:

The President has formally requested through his proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2016 (FY 2016) that language be included that states no funds shall be authorized for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to carry out inspections that are federally required for the reopening of domestic horse slaughter facilities. We are writing to urge you to include this requested language, commonly referred to as the "defund" language, in the FY 2016 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Horse slaughter is a cruel, predatory industry that is opposed by 80% of American voters. Congress currently prohibits the commercial slaughter of horses in the United States by including the defund language in the annual Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

In addition to the inherent cruelty associated with the practice, allowing horse slaughter operations to return to the United States poses very serious health and safety risks to the American public. Horses are not raised as food animals and are routinely given substances that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration prohibits in animals destined for human consumption.

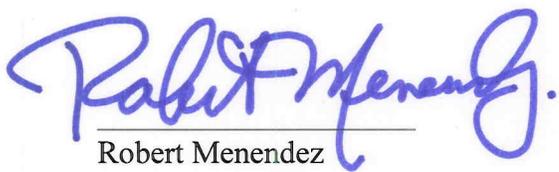
Requiring USDA funds for the inspection of an unsafe product that Americans do not eat is fiscally irresponsible. Especially at this time of budgetary constraints, USDA should not be required to fund new programs for an adulterated product from a brutal, unpopular industry. The many millions of dollars necessary to conduct horse slaughter inspections will be diverted from inspections of food items that Americans consume.

Moreover, the establishment of a domestic horse slaughter plant has the potential to threaten consumer confidence in American beef products. As a result of the 2013 European Union scandal in which horse meat mislabeled as beef, frozen burger sales in the U.K. dropped by 43 percent in the month following the discovery of horsemeat, sales of frozen-meat dishes in France dropped by 30 percent, and sales of ready-made pasta dishes, frozen foods and meat sauces in

Italy dropped by 30 percent. It is not difficult to imagine the devastating impact on the U.S. beef industry should a similar scandal happen in our country.

We appreciate your distinguished leadership on this bill. As you work to shape the upcoming FY 2016 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we respectfully request your review and inclusion of this language. If you have questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact us or our staffs.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



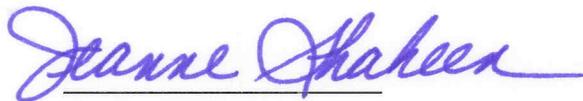
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



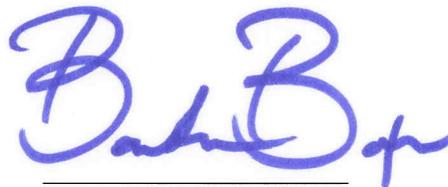
Jack Reed
United States Senator



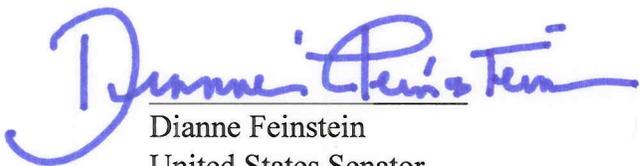
Charles Schumer
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Chris Coons
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

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Kirsten Gillibrand
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Susan M Collins

Susan Collins
United States Senator

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Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

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Patrick Leahy

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Tom Carper
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Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator