

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 19, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
The Capitol S-230
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
The Capitol S-221
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Chairman Cochran, and Ranking Member Leahy,

As negotiations for the final appropriations bill commence, we write in collective support of the provision (Section 758) in the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) Senate Agriculture Appropriations bill (S. 1603) that prohibits the use of federal funds for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspections of horse slaughter facilities. The Senate Appropriations Committee included the Udall Amendment prohibiting horse slaughter on a voice vote. This provision continues an overwhelmingly popular policy that prevents the slaughter of horses for human consumption.

Specifically, we ask that no funds be appropriated to pay the salaries or expenses of USDA personnel to inspect horses under section 3 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 603); or to implement or enforce section 352.19 of title 9, Code of Federal Regulations. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2006 (FY06) with the inclusion of the defund language and in Fiscal Year 2008 (FY08) with the prohibition on user fees, Congress has prohibited the slaughter of horses through the annual Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill for many years.

Horses are companions, work partners, athletes and cultural icons. They are not raised as food animals in the U.S., and are therefore routinely administered drugs and medications throughout their lives that are unsuitable for human consumption. Even fly spray and routine de-wormers contain chemicals that would be harmful to humans. Many of these drugs are expressly prohibited by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration due to their toxicity to humans when ingested.

Horse slaughter is an inherently cruel practice that 80% of Americans oppose. In a time when Congress is facing difficult budgetary decisions, it is an irresponsible use of tax payer dollars to support a practice that so many citizens oppose. There is no domestic market for horsemeat in

the U.S. Furthermore, the two states that most recently harbored the last three horse slaughter plants, Texas and Illinois, have laws permanently preventing their return.

We appreciate your distinguished leadership in the ongoing work on the FY18 appropriations bill. For the many reasons described, we respectfully urge that you maintain current law and include Section 758 of S. 1603 in the final FY18 appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



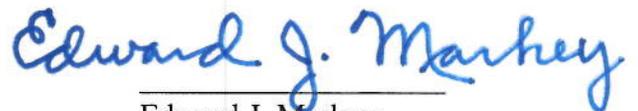
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



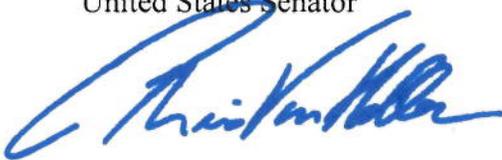
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



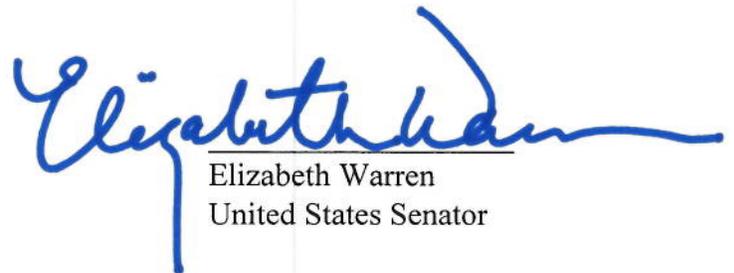
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



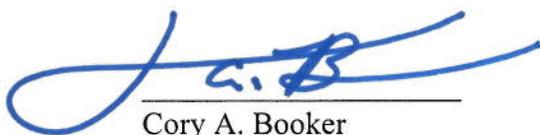
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



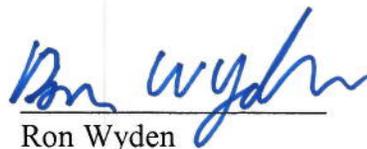
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



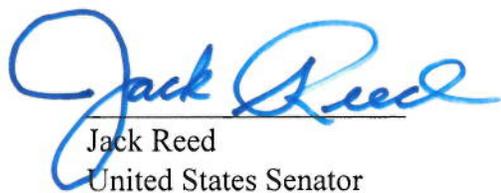
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



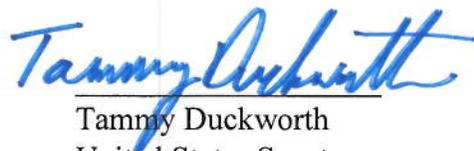
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Christopher Coons
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator