



A Letter to Oklahoma Legislators:

My grandfather, the inventor of the McKissick Pulley Block used in oil fields around the world, came to Oklahoma roughly one hundred years ago. I am a third generation Oklahoman, own my own company and live on a horse ranch.

I am appalled by the legislators' consideration of House Bill 1999 and the Senate's consideration of SB375. These bills pave the way for a horse slaughter industry in Oklahoma and should be defeated.

HB 1999 and SB375 have nothing to do with alleviating the suffering of abandoned horses and everything to do with profiting from establishing a dirty industry in our state. These bills would make Oklahoma the horse butchering capitol of the US allowing, for example, states like Wyoming to avoid the bad PR surrounding the killing of wild mustangs and paying us to slaughter them. It would also make Oklahoma the primary exporter of horsemeat to foreign countries, which means we're not just killing a few "abandoned horses," we're killing what amounts to herds of horses in order to "feed" a horse slaughter industry and meet foreign demand.

One only has to read the comments from government officials in Texas where horse slaughtering plants were in full force to understand that this will dramatically contaminate our land and lower real estate values. There is a reason that the states that had horse slaughter facilities (Texas and Illinois), both no longer have them and have laws to keep them out of their states. Further, a horse slaughtering industry diminishes Oklahoma's chances of recruiting intelligent workers to our state...a state ranking high in the number of women murdered due to domestic violence, and deaths of children from child abuse. And now you want to add horse slaughtering?

These bills encourage irresponsible breeding. After the culling for show horses and revenue producing stud colts and mares, if the breeder can't find a buyer for another riding horse, he can always take it to slaughter. And because the slaughter house pays a fee per head, this bill also encourages horse thievery.

HB 1999 and SB375 won't solve the abandonment of horses. Many of the people abandoning their horses for "economic reasons" will turn around and buy another horse the moment they can; and sadly, they will give it the same treatment. To solve the abandoned horse problem we need responsible breeding, rescue and rehab, severe penalties for abandonment and humane euthanasia.

The notion that these bills serve a humanitarian purpose, ending the suffering of abandoned horses, is merely smoke screen for an industry that was lobbied and paid for by those who stand to profit most.

These bills are not worthy of the relationship America has with the horse. The horse allowed early man to connect the continents and win wars, carrying him into battle to conquer civilizations. The horse herded our cattle and helped us win the west. Horses hauled coal out of our mines until they went blind. They towed the railroad ties that connected east to west. Today, therapy horses carry crippled children, their steady stride and massive bodies healing their spirits. The horse has won little girls' hearts, taught our young boys patience

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and kindness and thrilled us all at the Kentucky Derby. Horses are among the top five smartest creatures on earth including mankind. We have a special relationship with this animal. It has earned a better end than our legislature proposes.

As a voter with deep roots in Oklahoma, and the owner of a national firm based in Oklahoma, I demand that horse slaughtering be defeated in our state.

Pam McKissick

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