

Testimony of Susan Mitchell of Simsbury in support of SB 146 An Act Concerning  
Certain Requirements of Commission Sales Stables

Currently the United States ships approximately 150,000 horses across our borders into Mexico and Canada for slaughter. Many states are beginning to write and pass their own legislation to stop this horrible practice. A full 80% of Americans polled oppose horse slaughter and yet we are still allowing it to happen.

Connecticut can take the lead and step to the forefront on this issue.

Solutions:

- Add to this bill language permanently prohibiting the sale and transport of horses in, out and through the state of Connecticut which are intended for slaughter or intended to be sold at any locale that permits the purchase of horses to known kill buyers. (Horses going to auction barns have only a 10% chance of being purchased for something other than slaughter. That's a mere 1 in 10 that gets saved!!! These are not old rundown, ill or infirmed horses. These are healthy bright horses who all too often were someone's best friend until they moved up into a larger or better steed. Many of them have histories of having been amazing show horses or they can be turned into amazing show horses if given the chance.)

\*Develop licensing/ passports and microchipping programs. The problem is over breeding. Licensing would start with the vet. Horses are required to have a rabies booster and owners get a rabies certificate. Issue certificate in duplicate, one copy goes to State with the yearly licensing fee. Licensing, including need for special licenses for breeding, would thwart many people from taking on and/or breeding horses. Studs should carry much steeper fee in part due to their potentially more dangerous nature.

\*Move towards a passport/microchip program requiring foals born after a certain date be passported and chipped. Passports serve to be lifetime medical record for horses which greatly helps keep potential buyers from being scammed, limits the ability to steal and resell a horse for any purpose and permits the tracking of horses leased out. This would curtail much backyard breeding which does have a significant impact on the overpopulation.

\*Fees collected should go into a kitty to support programs specifically designed to help the equines within the state.

\*Forbid the sale of pregnant mares. Many pregnant mares go to slaughter when they are 10 months pregnant because they are worth more money. This should be considered abuse.

Please consider the 32 horses that were recently seized down in East Hampton. These people are breeders! These are breeders breeding some very expensive breeds such as Friesian's and Gypsy Vanners. They got in over their heads. Why? Greed!

Program for voluntary surrender of a horse, or any animal, with a body score above a certain level results in no penalty to owner. Provides a way out for people and provides incentive to do the right thing expediently. However, If the animal's body score falls below an acceptable level or if the owner is turned in by someone then there is no amnesty, owner is charged with felony..

- A humane euthanasia program at little to no cost within the State. True cost of euthanasia is under a dollar. (Many horses can safely be put down in their own backyard and buried right on the premises.)

- Composting is an option. There is also the ability to compost a horse on private land. Cornell University has done a wonderful study proving that this can be done very safely. Many Landfills will also take carcasses
- We could work with the crematory to provide a low to no cost cremation for people who financially qualify for assistance.
- Gelding clinics for low or no cost could be offered.
- Repurposing/retraining thoroughbreds and other racing horses should be a viable option with incentives.
- Education, education, education!!!! People need to know the impact of their breeding for fun or money. People need to know the options available to them when they can no longer care for their horses. (Many horses go to slaughter because the owners hand them over to someone who has promised them good care but who intend only to send them to the auction barn or kill lot. Too many innocent owners just don't know!!!!)
- Enforce private contracts. Make breach of contract a criminal offense.

Another issue of great importance is that of private contracts between sellers and buyers, leasers and leasees, that promise first right of refusal should the buyer decide not to keep the horse. These contracts are all too often broken with the horse ending up at the kill lots. A breach of these contracts should be considered a criminal offense as opposed to a civil matter. There are far too many stories of horses ending up at kill lots when such contracts exist.

- Convert the First Governor's Horse Guard facility in Avon, into a rescue facility. It is already at great threat of closing. I believe those rescue horses would do much

to rescue our PTSD soldiers and other veterans as they learn to bond and trust again, giving them the opportunity to rebuild themselves from the inside out. Those same horses could be given the task of helping women at risk, children at risk, children in foster care. etc

In conclusion, Connecticut cannot make their program perfect until all states take a strong stand against slaughter too. But Connecticut can stand out as a leader and a model to other states. We can set the bar high by having options for people and by having programs that are funded through the licensing of horses...and I believe by a lot of dedicated volunteers.

I know this seems like a daunting task but there are many of us here in the state who will work tirelessly with you to create something that really stands out to protect these animals and to make Connecticut shine. I am begging you to please listen to the people of America. Please hear the 80% who are asking for slaughter to end. Please represent your constituents and end this. Animals are not property any more than slaves should ever have been seen as property. We don't get to beat them, neglect them and send them off on a frightening journey to a horrifically painful death.

Furthermore, horse meat is not safe for human consumption unless it has been raised specifically for human consumption. The ASDA in Europe tested 6 carcasses and found traces of Bute in each one. Bute is just one commonly used drug that is a known carcinogen to humans. With the advent of our free trade agreement which no longer requires the meat coming into this country be labeled with "country of origin" I have

zero faith that horse meat will not find its way into our food source here in America. We will be consuming ground horse meat at some point and to some extent unless we stop the slaughter.