

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1009

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Urging the reinstatement and funding of federal inspection programs governing equine slaughter and processing facilities.

WHEREAS, the slaughter and processing of horses has become a controversial and contentious issue, which has resulted in the closing of the last horse processing and slaughter facilities in the United States; and

WHEREAS, thousands of unwanted horses annually are exposed to abandonment and neglect because of the cessation of horse slaughter in the United States. These additional abandoned horses compete for adoption with wild horses that are fed and sheltered at public expense. The nation's overburdened horse rescue facilities cannot absorb the influx of additional unwanted and abandoned horses that result from the cessation of equine slaughter, processing, and transport activity; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, Congress removed funding for USDA inspection programs for horse slaughter and processing intended for human consumption. These funding bans have continued for several years and have effectively prevented the operation of slaughter facilities; and

WHEREAS, federal dollars cannot be spent on salaries for inspectors who inspect horses before or after slaughter, making it impossible for processing operations to market horse meat. Inspectors cannot respond to voluntary or state fee-based inspection requests to inspect horse meat; and

WHEREAS, some states are investigating or have approved state processing of abandoned or stray horses. Given the current state of the horse processing industry, it is particularly important that the federal government not restrict access to inspection. Horse processing facilities cannot operate in the United States unless federal inspection for such facilities is funded and reinstated; and

WHEREAS, pending legislation in Congress, the Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act, would further restrict actions related to horse slaughter and horse processing, and would prohibit the transport and export of horses outside of the United States for the purpose of slaughter for human consumption; and

WHEREAS, if transport of horses to Mexico and Canada for slaughter and processing for human consumption is prohibited, the number of additional abandoned horses in the United States will increase even further; and

WHEREAS, the South Dakota Legislature in 2010 overwhelmingly adopted SCR 4, Opposing Certain Federal Legislation Related to Equine Slaughter and Processing and Urging the Reinstatement and Funding of Federal Inspection Programs Governing Equine Slaughter and Processing Facilities, and HCR 1003, Supporting the Reintroduction of Horse Slaughter and Processing operations in the United States. In 2009, the Legislature overwhelmingly approved SCR 2, Urging the Reinstatement and Funding of a Federal Inspection Program Governing Horse Slaughter and Euthanasia Facilities, and SCR 10, Supporting Legislative Efforts in Other States Addressing the Need to Provide for Equine Slaughter and Processing in the United States; and

WHEREAS, a number of states, including Arkansas, Arizona, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, and Wyoming, have introduced bills and resolutions opposing efforts to restrict the marketing, transport, processing, or export of horses; recognizing the need for humane horse processing facilities in the United States; and supporting state efforts to establish facilities in the United States; and

WHEREAS, such diverse organizations as the Midwestern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Congress of American Indians adopted resolutions and policy in support of horse processing and related activities in the United States; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical need for humane horse processing facilities in the United States to reduce the suffering inflicted on unwanted and abandoned horses and to meet overseas export markets for horsemeat in a humane manner:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Eighty-sixth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that the South Dakota Legislature urges the Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture to reinstate and fully fund USDA's inspection program for equine euthanasia, slaughter, and processing facilities and to enact legislation to facilitate the resumption of equine processing and slaughter in the United States.

Adopted by the House of Representatives,
Concurred in by the Senate,

February 23, 2011
February 25, 2011

Val Rausch
Speaker of the House

Karen Gerdes
Chief Clerk of the House

Matt Michels
President of the Senate

Trudy Evenstad
Secretary of the Senate