

THE LOST HORSES

Responding to Opposition

What They Say:

“Horses sent to slaughter are old, sick, or dangerous. It’s humane euthanasia.”

The Facts:

The USDA’s own data and kill pen records show the majority are healthy, sound, and under 10 years old—many are young, well-trained, and adoptable. Slaughter is not euthanasia. It’s a long, brutal process involving crowded transport, lack of food and water, and often multiple failed attempts to kill the animal. True humane euthanasia is performed by a veterinarian, quickly and without fear or pain.

What They Say:

“Horse slaughter is necessary to deal with unwanted horses.”

The Facts:

This is a problem created by overbreeding, failed adoption follow-through, and inadequate safety nets for horse owners—not by horses themselves. The U.S. already has humane, effective alternatives: retraining programs, rehoming networks, and low-cost euthanasia. Other countries have banned slaughter entirely without creating an “unwanted horse crisis.”

What They Say:

“Horse slaughter is an economic necessity for the livestock industry.”

The Facts:

Horse slaughter is driven by demand for horse meat overseas, not by U.S. economic need. It

benefits a handful of kill buyers, transporters, and foreign-owned slaughterhouses. Communities near horse slaughter facilities report crime, pollution, and economic decline—not jobs and prosperity.

What They Say:

“Horses are livestock, just like cattle.”

The Facts:

Horses in the U.S. are companion and working animals, not raised for meat. More than 80% of Americans oppose horse slaughter. Horses are deeply integrated into American culture—from ranch work and therapeutic programs to sport and recreation—and deserve the same protections given to pets.

What They Say:

“Slaughter prevents neglect.”

The Facts:

The presence of slaughter actually encourages neglect by giving irresponsible owners and traders a quick cash-out. In fact, slaughter pipelines are often the end point for neglected or abused horses who could have been rehomed. Where slaughter has been banned, neglect rates did not increase.

What They Say:

“Wild horses are overpopulated and slaughter is a solution.”

The Facts:

Wild horse overpopulation is a myth perpetuated by agencies under pressure from livestock and extractive industries. The BLM removes wild horses from their ranges not because they are starving, but to free up public land for cattle grazing. Many wild horses end up in the slaughter pipeline after government roundups.

What They Say:

“There’s no viable alternative to slaughter.”

The Facts:

There is: Pass the SAFE Act. The Save America's Forgotten Equines Act (H.R. 3475/S. 2037) would permanently ban horse slaughter in the U.S. and the export of horses for slaughter abroad. With federal funding for retraining and rehoming programs, and strong partnerships with rescues, we can end slaughter without leaving horses behind.