

The Far Reaching Effects of HR 503, The American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act

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“Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn’t mean politics won’t take an interest in you.”

Pericles (430 B.C.)

AQHA's Position on Unwanted Horses

The American Quarter Horse Association recognizes the rights of all horse owners to manage their horses, in their best interests as long as their horses are treated humanely, with dignity, respect, and compassion. To that end, AQHA believes horse owners should have all legal options available when relinquishing ownership of an unwanted horse.

AQHA's Position on Euthanasia of Horses

Horses should be euthanized in a humane manner in accordance with the guidelines established by the American Veterinary Medical Association and federal and state law.

AQHA's Position on Horse Adoption and Retirement Facilities

Currently, AQHA recognizes adoption and retirement facilities as an option for owners of unwanted horses. However, at this time, AQHA will not endorse any specific facilities, as there are no regulations governing the operation of these businesses.

AQHA's Position on the Human Consumption of Horsemeat

AQHA recognizes that the human consumption of horsemeat is a cultural and personal issue and does not fall within the purview of the association.

AQHA's Position on Transportation of Horses to Processing

Horses destined for processing should be transported to the production facility according to the federal regulations adopted and enforced by the United States Department of Agriculture in 2002.

Horse Processing Legislation

- California Proposition 6 - 1998
- The Morella Bill - 2001
- HR 857 – The American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act – 2003
- Agriculture Appropriations to Restrict Funding for Inspectors - 2005
- HR 503 – The American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act - 2005
- State Initiatives – Connecticut/New Mexico - 2005

Bill Proponents Talking Points

- Horses are part of the heritage of this country
- Americans don't consume horsemeat
- Transportation is inhumane
- Slaughter is not humane euthanasia
- Meat is served as a delicacy for the upper class

Final Takeaway Points for Bill Proponents

- Horses are companion animals
- There must be an end to all animal agriculture

Bill Opponents Talking Points

- Insufficient Infrastructure
- Insufficient Funding
- Transportation Regulations
- Disposal Issues
- Abuse/Neglect
- Personal Property Rights
- Humane Euthanasia

Report of the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia
(2000)

Other Organizations Opposing HR 857

- American Association of Equine Practitioners
- American Veterinary Medical Association
- National Cattlemen's Beef Association
- National Pork Council
- Poultry Associations
- Over 100 National Associations
- Over 200 Associations across the U.S.

“No Man’s life, liberty, or property are safe while the legislature is in session.”

Mark Twain (1866)

Lessons Learned

- Communication with Members
- Early Legislative Contacts
- Coalition Formation
- Professional Communication Pieces
- Building a Grassroots Network
- Early Identification of Allies

Grassroots is the Name of the Game

- “If citizen action is to be successful, it requires careful preparation, effective organization and stamina. Lots and lots of stamina.”

John Gardner, Founder, Common Cause



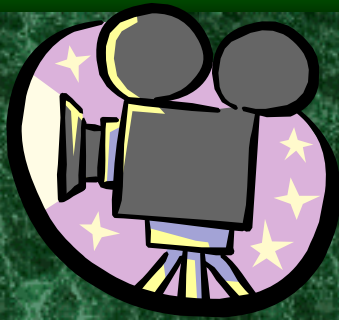
A Primer on Grassroots Activism

- Write positive letters to legislators and the media.
- Build relationships in “down” times, not during a crisis.
- Be aware that friends can hurt you worse than enemies – make sure you and your allies are well-prepared and rehearsed prior to giving public testimony, and that everyone understands the importance of “staying on task.”
- Join activist groups in order to get on mailing and e-mail lists.

The Facts...

- “It doesn’t matter what is true -- it only matters what people believe is true...you are what the media define you to be.”

Paul Watson, co-founder of Greenpeace



Public Perception

- TV drives more images than any other medium.
- First impressions become lasting impressions...and usually take less than 30 seconds to form.
- People then look for corroboration of their first impression.
- If a belief is formed, it is nearly impossible to change.

The Christian Coalition

- “Most people are totally unprepared for organizations like ours, and they wake up one morning and their switchboards are jammed and they never even know that this stuff was going on. The other thing is that most corporations, their marketing executives, their public affairs executives, and their government affairs executives are trained to be engaged in things like imaging and marketing instead of direct response. **And essentially, what we do is direct response.**

Ralph Reed, former head of The Christian Coalition

What Creates an Issue?

- One newsworthy event advocated by a motivated individual.
- Confusion regarding scientific fact.
- Distrust of motives.
- Lack of knowledge.

A Primer on Grassroots Activism

- Document your efforts at dialogue with the other side; make sure policymakers see you do it
- Avoid acronyms – define terms.
- Sound science alone won't save the day. Highlighting obscure benefits such as “choice” and “flexibility” may get further than sound science.
- Remember that all it takes is one motivated mom, government employee, teacher, etc. to become an activist.

A Primer on Grassroots Activism

- All issues are cyclical. Learn from them and keep your contacts, you'll need them again.
- Negotiation is only as good as the parties involved.

There's An Old Saying...

- *"Those who believe that they are too smart to engage in politics are punished by being governed by those who are dumber."*

Plato