

June 5, 2019

The Honorable Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.
Chair Committee on Racing Gaming and Wagering
The Honorable Monica R. Martinez
Chair Committee on Domestic Animal Welfare
Legislative Office Building
Hearing Room A
188 State Street Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senators,

Equine Rescue Resource Inc. is a New York State not-for-profit class b corporation, founded in 1999 for the prevention of cruelty to animals, specializing in horses. Over the last 20 years, ERR has provided emergency rescue, rehabilitation and adoption services throughout the state. We are not breed specific, and we do find thoroughbred and standardbred horses in need of our assistance.

As a horse professional, owning a horse farm and having worked in both the standardbred and thoroughbred industries in various capacities, I do believe that if racehorses were allowed to mature properly, before being pushed in to high impact sports, and their performance was honest, without the use of drugs and performance enhancers, we would have stronger, sounder horses with less injuries and casualties. All of which would have a positive impact on the horse's long term welfare.

At livestock auctions here in NY, we have aided thoroughbreds sold because they were injured and no longer equitable to their racing connections. We have found Standardbreds that break down during their second career as road horses and can no longer provide labor and transportation to their owners, for that is all they are to them. Discarded broodmares, who are reproductively unsound are viewed as an unnecessary expense to breeders. These horses are sold by the pound, for their meat. Their stories do not end there, and they do not end well.

Working as a support agency for law enforcement throughout NY, we have assisted in many cruelty cases. The most expensive cases, with the highest numbers of horses, have been from the racing industry. One example is the Ernie Paragallo case, of which I was the complainant in 2009. I picked up 2 severely neglected thoroughbred horses and initiated a cruelty complaint. Five days later, 166 horses were seized. The resources required in that case were astronomical. To compare, the average number of horses in cruelty cases that are not racing related is 10, and a higher percentage of pleasure bred horses move on to homes within 1 year.

Our organization has recently assisted in cases where enforcement lacked the resources to hold cruel and neglectful owners accountable, and horses were voluntarily surrendered to rescues in lieu of prosecution. A poor solution, cultivating serial abuse, and leaving rescue organizations responsible for expensive rehabilitation.

Accountability, owner responsibility, traceability, tax relief, resources for cruelty enforcement and funding for responsible retirement of racehorses are all things desperately needed in the racing industry.

ERR urges you to support - S. 1974 – Establishes the Commission on Retired Racehorses. - S. 1976 – Prohibits the use of performance enhancing drugs in horseracing. - S. 1497 – Prohibits the slaughter of horses for human consumption. - S. 2615 - Provides for a tax check-off box on personal income tax and corporate franchise tax returns for gifts to the New York State horse retirement and rescue fund. - S. 3389 - Provides for a tax exemption for commercial horse boarding services when provided by a commercial horse boarding operation. -

S. 4287 – Creates the responsible retirement of racehorses fund; horse registration fee. - S. 5983 - Prohibits the slaughter of horses for human consumption

Please do not hesitate to contact the New York State Horse Council should you have questions or be in need of our assistance. We are here for the horses.

Sincerely,

Colleen Segarra
President
Equine Rescue Resource Inc.
PO Box 17
Pine Bush, NY 12566
(845) 744-1728
equinerescueresource@hotmail.com
www.equinerescueresource.com



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Dear Senators,

Thank you for including the New York State Horse Council during your review of the Welfare of Racehorses in New York. The Council exists to create a strong unified voice for all horse interests in New York State, and to preserve the future of, and the industry created by, the horse.

It is our understanding that you will be examining health related issues of racehorses that are in training or actively racing, as well as considering resources for these horse's aftercare.

Please know, that in producing horses for the racing industry, we have taken on the responsibility of ensuring the humane and ethical treatment of these thoroughbred and standardbred horses, throughout all stages of their lives. We urge you to consider the current and long term welfare of the horses first, before all else, for without them there would be no industry.

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Please do not hesitate to contact the New York State Horse Council should you have questions or be in need of our assistance. We are here for the horses.

Sincerely,

Colleen Segarra
Vice President, Mid-Hudson Region
Chair, Humane Committee
New York State Horse Council
(845) 744-6462