



June 4, 2019

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
United States Senate  
455 Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Alexander:

The American Farm Bureau Federation supports the goals of S.1455, the Horse Protection Amendments Act. This legislation aims to enact science-based reforms to eliminate intentional horse soring and allow for reasonable inspection oversight of the walking horse industry. While the incidence of soring occurs in less than 2 percent of horses inspected, it is an unacceptable practice, which right-minded horse owners do not condone and one that blemishes the image of responsible horse men and women.

Although deliberate horse soring was banned by the federal Horse Protection Act (HPA) decades ago, enforcement of the HPA relative to soring has been handicapped by the lack of reliable, science-based inspection protocols to ensure uniformity across inspectors at walking horse industry events.

S. 1455 would include a definition of “objective inspection” centered on science-based methods reviewed by equine veterinarians to ensure reliable, reproducible results. In addition, the bill would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to create a single “Horse Industry Organization” (HIO) governed by appointed horse industry experts that would provide leadership to inspector licensing and development of testing and inspection procedures. This HIO (comprised of state agriculture officials and representatives of the Tennessee walking horse industry) would establish stringent conflict of interest policies for any individual licensed by the HIO to conduct inspections. The HIO would establish a formal affiliation with each horse sale, exhibition, show or auction in coordination with the Secretary to ensure HPA compliance.

Farm Bureau seeks an objective, science-based approach to the horse inspection process, and this bill calls for improved protocols that will help inspectors distinguish between legitimate training techniques and illegal soring practices. Your leadership on this issue is appreciated by our grassroots members, who are passionate about breeding, training, and enjoying the companionship of horses.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Zippy Duvall  
President

CC: The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable Marsha Blackburn  
The Honorable Rand Paul