



OREGON STATE SENATE

House Committee on Judiciary – Testimony
Sen. Mark Hass
SB 835

Horse tripping is the practice of roping the front or hind legs of a galloping horse – causing it to trip and come crashing to the ground – for the purposes of entertainment or sport. It is done intentionally, at fringe rodeos; points are awarded for “dropping the horse.” If you haven’t seen photos or videos of this practice, yes, it’s as bad as it sounds.

Twelve states have already outlawed horse tripping, including Texas, the state we often associate with rough and rugged cowboys. The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association has also banned horse tripping.

There is just no denying that roping a horse at its legs so that it crashes into the ground is shockingly cruel.

These animals typically weigh more than a thousand pounds and – unlike steer or calves – have a center of gravity several feet in the air. The sheer physics of these half-ton creatures, crashing onto the ground from that distance, is why they are often maimed or injured.

Our committee in the Senate heard disturbing testimony from a McMinnville livestock veterinarian who said, “I have seen up close the personal trauma, the abuse, the neglect those horses endure both BEFORE competition and after. ... These mares are not taken care of. Why should they be, they’re just going to go down easier if they’re weak.” (Dr. Barbara Kahl)

I am proud to join forces on this legislation with the good senator from Hermiston in promoting the Rodeo Bill of Rights. He’s from the east side – I’m from the west side. He’s republican. I’m a democrat. But we both like watching rodeos – especially when we’re sitting just above the chutes.

But to me, the bottom line is ... there is no amount of economic activity, entertainment value or tradition to justify this cruel, cruel practice. It is indefensible. It should be outlawed in Oregon – and with this bill, it will be.

Note: SB 835 was sent out of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee unanimously and passed by the Senate on a 22-6-2 vote.