

Dear Representatives:

Jeff Barker, Chair
Chris Garrett, Vice-Chair
Wayne Krieger, Vice-Chair
Brent Barton
Kevin Cameron
Wally Hicks
Andy Olson
Carolyn Tomei
Jennifer Williamson

Re: SB 835, Horse tripping legislation

I am very concerned for the safety and welfare of horses that are utilized in this event. I am Dr. Barbara Kahl, a mixed animal practitioner, President and Founder of the United SPCA, an Oregonian, and live on a horse farm in Yamhill, Oregon. I have been working with horses since I was 5 years old, an age where I began breaking ponies for a rancher. I am a professional in the equine industry, and have been a horse trainer, riding instructor (including for the Marine Corp), judge, boarding facility manager, and equine shelter manager.

I respectfully ask you to pass SB835 to end horse tripping in Oregon as a sport for entertainment purposes as the bill verbiage denotes. I have listened to the concerns of many ranchers from eastern Oregon that desire this become an East/West debate, cultural even. That is not the case. This bill stops the cruel and inhumane practice of tripping a horse from a full run to fall to the ground without any protection from injury.

There is a veterinarian that states this is normal, modern, veterinary practice-that is not the case. As an equine veterinarian there are many other ways to quiet an animal for treatment, and only an extreme case where a rope might be needed to stop an animal, i.e.: a wild horse that one cannot get close to without further injury to itself. But "anesthetic darts" in modern medicine are generally better accepted than chasing down an injured animal, causing more injury to that same animal. But that information was never provided to you by the opponents of the bill. The bill is not incorporating the practice of medicine, or day to day ranching practices into the verbiage.

There were comments from a Mayor that one town uses the funds from the rodeo for the church and school, etc. from this abuse practiced at their rodeo. If this continues, what does that say about Oregon when a church and school profit from animal abuse? Horse tripping is a sadistic practice, not even practiced in Spain, the country that brought it here in the 16th Century – yes – that long ago. We stopped all other abuses from that century – now we need to ensure this horrific act is also stopped. Opponents have provided testimony in attempts to cloud the real issue of continued animal abuse, which just doesn't start at their arena, in their event. It is an entire trade that practices these abuses, from the stock contractors raising these animals in neglect and abusive situations, to the ropers at the event.

x To understand what a horse goes through during one of these events, let's apply this sport to people, to you. First be forced into an elevator (the chute), the doors open, a person shocks you with 50 volts, not enough to knock you down, just enough to get you to run for your life in fear while your muscles tremor, as these people that sent a jolt of electricity through your body come running at you on horses or hide at a fence. They throw the rope, that rope pulls tight around your neck until you begin to suffocate, but you can't stop running as you are being chased. Your hands are roped and tied around your back, then the rope on your neck is jerked to send you forward, hitting the ground with full force impact, no way to protect yourself from injury. The expectation is that you would be able to get up and run off as if no trauma occurred. Common sense knows that damage does occur. Unlike a person, a horse's hair coat covers bruising, crushed tracheas (airways), rope burns, and swelling from the trauma they receive.

x As a flight or fight animal, horses take flight after this kind of cruel treatment, as if no injury occurred as their nervous system takes over to get them away from the objects they now fear for death is the next step, if it hadn't occurred by the tripping to begin with. Horses do get injured! They have crushed disks in their back, fractured vertebrae, snapped spines, torn muscles, tendons that tear from their bones, ligaments that are hyperextended, broken necks, the list goes on. The excuse from opponents is that there are not *enough* injuries, although they know they occur, to stop the sport. So, what is enough?

o One rancher said that people wouldn't allow their horses to be used for tripping if they knew injury would occur. I personally know that is not a true statement as I have treated horses that were used for tripping and been taken away from that situation. Some never recover, their injuries so bad euthanasia is the only humane option. Horses used for tripping are purposely bred and raised for the sport. They have no other purpose in life than to be bred, raised up for about a year or two, then sent in to the ring to be roped, die, or otherwise in the hands of their abusers. Aged horses are also used, as they slow down with time and are easier to catch to put on the "big show" for an audience.

2 Please see our website: www.unitedspca.org and look at the Woodburn 2011 photos – those are horses were bred purposely for the sport of tripping – they have no other use, therefore no concern if they die. In fact, if they die, the breeder/stock contractor has more horses purchased from them, increasing their profits through abuse. So, it has become an industry of legalized abuse and cruel animal trade because this sport is allowed in Oregon. Look at the Aumsville 2012 photos, those horses also are sent to tripping rodeos and practice – they have no other use. When we evaluated the herd in Aumsville, we found just the limb of a foal that remained out on the pasture – the rest of the foal was gone. If that doesn't sicken you about this industry enough to stop it, there isn't much else I can say.

x Many of these horses don't survive. They were bred for the sport, it makes no difference if they survive or not, another one will be bred to replace it for the next tripping event. Please use the powers given to you to stop this abuse. It is not a ranching or medical practice, it should not be the foundation for any town to be proud of and use for income through legalized animal abuse. It is a violation of Oregon's animal cruelty laws. Please, vote to pass SB835 in its current language – help to end Oregon's animal cruelty in this event. If you don't know already, Oregon

is the only state in the entire United States that currently allows this, please join the rest of the Nation and end this practice now.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barbara Kahl, DVM

President/Founder United SPCA

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