

HB 0171 - Crimes Against Animals - Interference With Livestock
Testimony of Maryland Horse Council, (Jane Seigler), Support

Hearing before the House Judiciary Committee, January 23, 2020

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based, umbrella trade association of the entire horse industry in Maryland. Our membership includes horse farms and stables, horse-related businesses, and horse owners, representing all facets of the Maryland equestrian community, from the owners of race horses to the owners of trail horses or just beloved retired companion horses. As such, we represent over 30,000 Marylanders.



The Maryland Horse Council supports HB 171.

HB 171 amends existing law. Section 10-620 of the Criminal Law Article. That statute currently punishes willful and malicious injury to or interference with horses used for racing, breeding or competition. The purpose of that law is to protect not only the horses, but also the general public, against ill-advised actions by individuals that might cause harm to themselves, the horses and others.

The current law takes into account actions by, for example, intoxicated persons, those with mental health issues, or those with ideological or political agendas, who target racing, breeding or competition horses to make their point. However, horses and other livestock are frequently seen in circumstances that are even more unsecured and exposed to mischief and mayhem than at racetracks, horse show facilities and breeding farms.

Horses and other livestock being used or exhibited for carriage rides, parades and fairs, for example, are very exposed to close interactions with the public, and therefore are vulnerable to incidents that may become out of control or dangerous.

We urge the committee to make the common sense decision to add livestock to this existing law that is intended to prevent avoidable harm and injury to animals and the public.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Seigler".

The Maryland Horse Council

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