



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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February 12, 2020
Ways and Means Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen St Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for HB 412 Purse Dedication Account - Maryland Horse Industry Fund - Retired Racehorses

Dear Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and members of the committee,

The Humane Society of the United States, representing our members and supporters in Maryland, supports HB 412 introduced by Delegate Krimm to require that 0.5% of the funds in the Purse Dedication Account be allocated to the Maryland Horse Industry Fund to be used to fund and award grants to be used for the care, retraining, and promotion of retired racehorses.

Our nation owes a debt of gratitude to horses. If we are going to put them to work for our entertainment, and use their gift of great speed, we must do so with tender care and take every reasonable step to assure their safety, at every stage of their lives. Responsibly retiring and ensuring a happy and meaningful life for racehorses at the conclusion of their racing careers is an industry and owner responsibility to these animals that have worked hard throughout years of training and competition.

While horses are not slaughtered for human consumption in the United States, more than 80,000 American horses are brutally slaughtered abroad each year so their meat can be shipped overseas for human consumption, including working, racing and companion horses. The USDA documented that 92.3 percent of horses sent to slaughter are in good condition and are able to live out a productive life, but they are purchased by "kill buyers" at horse auctions and shipped to slaughterhouses in Mexico and Canada instead.

Racing horses need a sufficient safety net after their careers to prevent them from entering the horse slaughter pipeline. There are several industry initiatives that recognize the need for racing aftercare, such as the [Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance](#), which inspects and awards grants to approved aftercare organizations to retire, retrain and rehome thoroughbreds using industry-wide funding. We applaud these efforts by the thoroughbred racing community to engage this important challenge, but the current programs are not sufficient to meet the need for rehoming former racing horses. This legislation is essential to ensure racehorses are treated with care and respect once they are no longer profitable by providing funding for horse rescues who care for these retired equines. I respectfully urge a favorable report for HB 412.

Sincerely,

Emily Hovermale
Maryland and Delaware State Director