



Graham Equestrian Center, Inc.

A Maryland non-profit corporation and equine education center

~ Graham Equestrian Center is an educational equine organization that promotes the joy of horses to a diverse community, regardless of income or ability, through riding and therapeutic horsemanship activities, while preserving the open space of Gunpowder Falls State Park.

Testimony against SB0452 - Courts - Prohibited Liability Agreements - Recreational Facilities

This bill is inconsistent with Maryland's stated desire to keep the horse industry alive and thriving in Maryland. An exception to this bill is required by the Maryland horse industry.

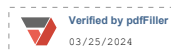
This bill poses a direct threat of increased insurance costs for riding stables, trainers and therapy providers. Many of these same organizations are already at the breaking point trying to remain in business while facing increasing costs and trying their very best not to price their services out of the reach of their clients. These organizations will have no recourse other than to raise their costs or go out of business.

As representatives of the State of Maryland I expect that you are aware of the immense benefits that horseback riding and associated therapy bring to individuals whether it be their career, preferred sport hobby, or a source of physical, emotional and psychological therapy that benefits any number of illnesses, ailments, disabilities and psychiatric conditions. Also as representatives of the State of Maryland I expect that you are also aware of the tremendous positive economic impact of the horse industry in the State of Maryland.

Given these expectations of your experience and knowledge I wholeheartedly hope that you can easily understand the devastating impact of this bill on the following:

- Individuals who love horses, riding and horsemanship
- Children who gain the valuable lessons of empathy, responsibility and work ethic through their experiences at riding stables - not to mention taking away the sheer joy that they experience with their equine friends both two and four legged
- Employees of riding, training and therapy barns some of whom will undoubtedly close their doors should this bill pass
- Employees of supporting industries such as veterinarians, farriers, hay farmers, grain producers, retail sales of equipment, clothing, footwear associated with the horse industry
- Persons suffering from injuries, disabilities, psychiatric diseases, persons in recovery and those with emotional issues such as depression and PTSD
- Increasing the number of horses in the slaughter pipeline

Elizabeth Barbara Hartka



Elizabeth Hartka - Vice President, Graham Equestrian Center