



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

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One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on HB 89

Criminal Law – Animal Abuse or Neglect – Conviction & Sentencing

FAVORABLE

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the \$2.9 billion, state-wide, horse industry in Maryland. Our members include horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted therapy programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We represent over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them.

Animal cruelty is the highest legislative priority for our members. Horse ownership comes with a moral and ethical obligation to provide one's horse with the best quality of life possible. It also comes with the obligation to move one's horse to a better home if one is no longer able to provide sufficient care. MHC feels sufficiently strongly about this issue that we developed the Guide to Minimum Standards of Care for Equines, which is used in cruelty and neglect cases in Maryland and around the United States.

Horse owners who criminally abuse and neglect their horses have breached their obligations to the animal to an unforgiveable degree. We support any efforts to punish such defendants severely.

We urge a favorable report on HB 89.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL
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