

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2018

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 129
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 190
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Merkley:

As the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies considers the Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) Appropriations Bill, we respectfully ask you to retain the Udall Amendment language from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (Division A, Title VII, Sec. 782) that ensures that no funding is authorized for horse meat inspectors or inspections, which would prevent domestic horse slaughter plants from operating.

Specifically, we ask that no funds be appropriated to pay the salaries or expenses of USDA personnel to inspect horses under section 3 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 603); or to implement or enforce section 352.19 of title 9, Code of Federal Regulations. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2006 (FY06) with the inclusion of the defund language and in Fiscal Year 2008 (FY08) with the prohibition on user fees, Congress has been prohibiting the slaughter of horses through the annual Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

The slaughter of horses for human consumption is opposed by 80 percent of Americans for multiple reasons. In addition to the inherent cruelty associated with the practice, allowing horse slaughter operations to return to the United States poses very serious health and safety risks to the American public. Horses are not raised as food animals and are routinely given substances that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration prohibits in animals destined for human consumption.

Requiring USDA funds for the inspection of an unsafe product that Americans do not eat is fiscally irresponsible. In this time of continued budgetary constraints, USDA should not be required to fund unnecessary programs for an unwanted industry. The millions of dollars necessary to conduct horse slaughter inspections will be diverted from inspections of food items that Americans consume and where it has recently become evident that more inspections may be necessary.

Moreover, the establishment of a domestic horse slaughter plant has the potential to threaten consumer confidence in American beef products. As a result of the 2013 European Union scandal in which horse meat mislabeled as beef, frozen burger sales in the U.K. dropped by 43 percent in the month following the discovery of horsemeat, sales of frozen-meat dishes in France dropped by 30 percent, and sales of ready-made pasta dishes, frozen foods and meat sauces in Italy dropped by 30 percent. It is not difficult to imagine the devastating impact on the U.S. beef industry should a similar scandal happen in our country.

We appreciate your distinguished leadership on this bill. As you work to shape the upcoming FY19 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we respectfully request your review and inclusion of this language. If you have questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact us or our staffs.

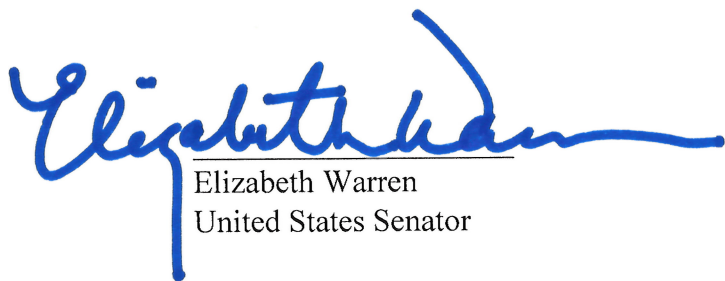
Sincerely,



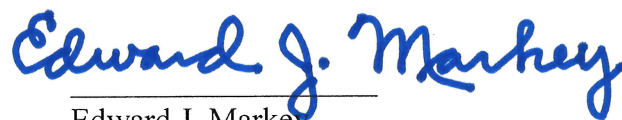
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



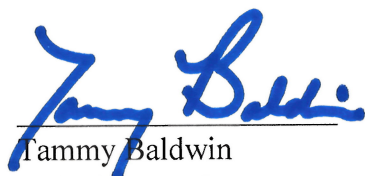
Tom Udall
United States Senator



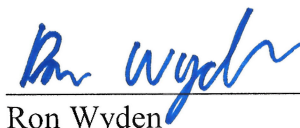
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



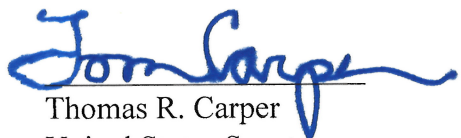
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



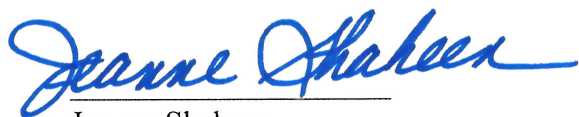
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



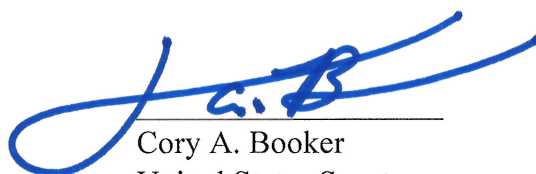
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



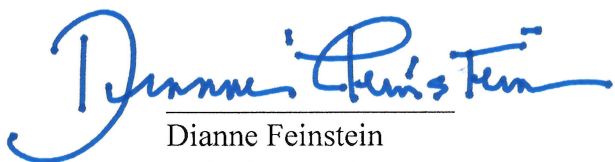
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



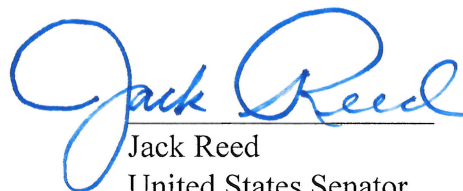
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



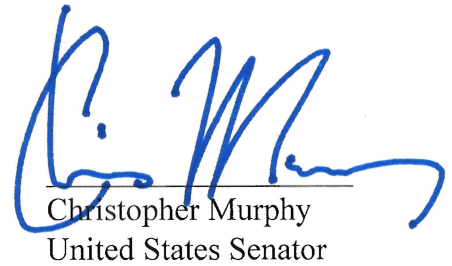
Christopher Van Hollen
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

A stylized, cursive blue ink signature of Kamala D. Harris.

Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

A stylized, cursive blue ink signature of Christopher Murphy.

Christopher Murphy
United States Senator

A stylized, cursive blue ink signature of Bernard Sanders.

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

A stylized, cursive blue ink signature of Kirsten Gillibrand.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

A stylized, cursive blue ink signature of Benjamin L. Cardin.

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator