

Good morning honored Chairperson, members of the Judiciary Committee and guests

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of appearing before you today at this hearing on HB2127. My name is Carol M Chapman and I am a Systems Specialist for a major software vendor based out of the state of Connecticut. I also have the honor of being a horse owner and have observed first hand the results of improper loading, trucking, and lack of care on the part of irresponsible horse haulers. My first hand experience in the forum of horse transport has included:

- Trailering my own from upstate New York to Connecticut
- Trailering a mare and six week old from one town to the next
- Emergency transport of a horse with a rupturing bladder from one end of my state to the other in the dead of night.
- Being on site when a truck arrived at a slaughter plant,
- Assisting in the care of the mangled results from a small time pony ride operator that lost a pony out of the back of a decrepit trailer doing sixty miles an hour on the highway,
- Watching them load by dragging, downed horses out of the back of an auction house.

Some of the horrors I have witnessed were due to the lack of caring on the part of 'killer bound' truck drivers and buyers, some due to ineptitude; some were caused by 'just plain ignorance'. Regardless of the cause, the results were the same: pain, suffering, anguish, and torture of a feeling, living being. Monetarily the loss of revenue on the part of the consignor of the killer bound horses must also have an impact. The percentage loss of cargo on the truck I saw unloaded was over ten percent, and if that is an acceptable kill ratio on hauls to slaughter houses it displays graphically the enormous profit margin in that business. Certainly some of that profit could be spread to greater care of the cargo and recouped through the additional gain from delivering a higher percentage of live animals to the end destination.

I am not here to address the ethics of slaughter only the regrettable methods of denial implemented in the unfeeling transport to it. To cram mares, intact stallions, foals together in a pasture is to invite injury just by the nature of the horse herd dynamics. Most responsible horse owners even segregate geldings from mares to cut down on pasture fights and resulting injuries. If a defeated horse can not get away from the aggressor fatal damage can result. How much worse to invite injury and death by cramming them together in a tight, too low space with no place for the timid to retreat to and no way for a mother to protect her own baby from the fearful trampling of other horse's feet. The babies go down and others stand on them, the weak go down, and their blood stains the feet of the stronger. Stallions madly attack all that they perceive as aggressors to their territory and the screams of the strongest of the fear crazed animals does not drown out the anguished cries of the weaker. Horses are prey animals and the smell of fear and horse blood resurrects the ancestral memories and hell rides in that trailer with them.

Any vet will tell you that horses are sensitive creatures, they can die from fear as readily as a rabbit, and the pain of colic brings tears to their eyes. A horse will go into depression at the loss of a herdmate, cry and search hopelessly for a lost baby, and fiercely defend their herdmates. Horses care about their owners, pet dogs, goats and cats. We discuss some people as being empathetic, those that seem to care more than others, contain more joy, suffer more sorrow. Empathy is a two edged sword, higher heights yet lower depths. Horses are one of the strongest empathths of the animal kingdom and consequently the last ride we offer so many is equivalent to slowly flaying alive someone exposing one raw bleeding nerve after another with no relief from the unending torment till death mercifully ends the pain.

You have the ability to change this torture to a humane ride that segregates into safety, keeps the babies and their mothers off, stops the trampling of broken legged horses, feeds the hungry, gives drink to the thirsty and rests the weary. You can make a difference between unending torment and quiet acceptance. I would like to think that someday soon horses in any form of transport in the state of Pennsylvania would travel in safety with their basic needs taken care of. When one of those trucks pass you on the road you as a committee member will be able to smile at it, and not have to bow your heads in shame at the sounds and smells that come out of it.