

# Midwest Thoroughbred

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **House Committee on Transportation Unanimously Approves a Bill to Ban Hauling Horses on Double Deck Trailers**

(Washington, DC) – The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) applauds Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN), of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for bringing the Horse Transportation Safety Act (H.R. 305) before his Committee and supporting its swift unanimous passage.

"We are especially grateful for the leadership and commitment of the bill's sponsors Congressman Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Congressman Steve Cohen (D-TN). Both have been incredible champions for the welfare of America's horses," noted Christine Sequenzia, AWI federal policy advisor.

Several bipartisan co-sponsors spoke in support of H.R. 305 during the hearing, including a poignant opening statement by Congressman Cohen. H.R. 305 passed by a voice vote with no amendments and is now headed to the House floor.

This crucial bill will ban the hauling of horses on double deck livestock trailers. Double deck trailers were designed to accommodate livestock, such as cattle, swine and other shorter necked species. According to USDA, horses can stand 8 feet tall and up to 12 feet when rearing. Consequently, the American Veterinary Medical Association's literature review recommends that horses have a minimum of 7-8 feet of clearance. Double deck trailers, on the other hand, can have ceilings as low as 4 feet 7 inches. Currently, these trailers are being used to haul horses in overcrowded conditions—and in most cases to slaughter.

These unaccommodating conditions are not only dangerous for the horses, but to drivers, as well. Several catastrophic accidents involving double deck trailers have occurred in recent years. In 2006, a double deck truck hauling 41 horses in Missouri crashed and resulted in the death of 16 horses. In 2008, a double deck trailer carrying 59 horses in Illinois struck another vehicle after blowing through a stop sign. It took five hours to

rescue the horses from this mangled truck; 9 horses died at the scene, and an additional 6 died later due to injuries sustained in the crash.

Today's vote was critical to the safety of horses being transported, safety of drivers on our roadways, and safety of first responders who generally are not trained in equine medical attention. The USDA stated, "We do not believe that equines can be safely and humanely transported on a conveyance that has an animal cargo space divided into two or more stacked levels."

"Thanks to horse champions such as Chairman Oberstar and Congressmen Kirk and Cohen, we are one step closer to more humane methods of transport for equines and safer roadways for drivers," said Sequenzia.

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