

KANSAS HORSE COUNCIL TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 87

Statement to the Senate Standing Committee on Ag

Feb. 25, 2013

Pattie Stalder, Kansas Horse Council

Chairman Love and members of the Senate Committee on Ag,

We rank 7th nationwide in the number of American Quarter Horses with over 80,000 in Kansas in 2011. Our horse industry is an important contributor to the state's economy not only through recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors, but it's a vital part of our cattle industry as they work on ranches across the state. Due to the recent economic downturn and the Unwanted Horse issue, the state's horse industry has suffered and is in decline. Because there has been no funding available, the most recent equine survey done in Kansas was 17 years ago so it's impossible to know the actual extent of the decline.

You've heard testimony and received information on what can be accomplished with the passage of this bill. I would like to share my personal concerns on what we may lose if it doesn't pass.

I was a 4-H leader for 10 years, my family belonged to the BlackJack Saddle Club in Pottawatomie County for at least 10 years, I served the past 5 years as the treasurer for the Kansas Hunter Jumper Association and I've worked for the Kansas Horse Council for almost six years. My daughters and granddaughter grew up riding on Kansas public trails and showing locally. Families like mine who enjoy horses as our family recreation and see them more as a "luxury item" make up the majority of horse owners in this state and I believe, the majority of horse owners in each of your districts.

While serving as a coach for 4-H Quiz Bowl teams and Hippology teams, I took 4-H members to represent Kansas at the National Quiz Bowl Competition held at the Quarter Horse Congress in Columbus, OH and also to public speaking competitions at the Western Nationals in Denver.

One of our team members won the national public speaking competition in 1999, one of the girls received her Animal Science degree from KSU and became a wrangler at a large dude ranch in Wyoming. One team member is now a practicing vet here in Kansas, another is still in vet school and another has her Masters in Engineering and wants to design prosthetics for horses.

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*Pattie Stalder, KS Horse Council*  
*SB 87*

The sad part of this is that Pottawatomie County no longer has its' own Quiz Bowl or Hippology teams. They've had to go to surrounding counties to have enough members to make up a team.

We're not trying to raise money to create massive PR campaigns like "Got Milk?" or "Beef, it's what's for dinner." We just need basic help with things like maintaining the infrastructure of aging 4-H facilities and local saddle club arenas, so that the leaders of tomorrow have a safe place to ride and show today.

As you know from the testimony already given, the impact of this bill goes way beyond 4-H. But the over-riding point is that a small grant provided by the K.E.E.P. revenues will make a big difference in public education and public involvement in the horse industry; expansion of participation in equine events; support for equine research and improving the welfare of our state's horses, mules and burros.

We've shown that the industry supports this bill. We printed 50,000 flyers to distribute across the state and when I say "we", it was paid for by the Wheat State Morgan Horse Assoc., KS Paint Horse Assoc., KS Thoroughbred Assoc., Eastern Kansas Arabian Horse Assoc., KS Hunter Jumper Assoc., KS Draft Horse & Mule Assoc. and the Kansas Horse Council.

So why is it not okay for us to have the same opportunities to financially support our chosen agricultural industry in the same way as our neighbor that reaps the benefits of the beef check-off?

Our state's economy needs our equine industry to grow, not decline and we need you to pass this bill to make that happen.

I appreciate your valuable time in allowing this hearing. Are there any questions?