



Colorado Veterinary
Medical Association

Testimony before the
House Agriculture, Livestock, and Natural Resources Committee
In regard to SB10-139
April 7, 2010

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

My name is Dr. Bill Fredregill and a Sterling native and, in so being, a constituent of Rep. Sonnenberg's district. I am President of the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association which represents over 2100 veterinarians in the state of Colorado.

I want to thank Rep. Sonnenberg for his sponsorship of SB 139 The Unwanted Horse Tax Checkoff Bill. Coming from a background of production agriculture I applaud his bold and enlightened support of this unique approach to a vexing problem.

My colleagues in equine practice are charged with providing medical care of the horse population of our state from birth until death. Their patients include the occasional pleasure horse, the Dude Ranch steed important to our tourist industry, the working ranch horse still an integral part of many ranching operations, the magnificent Clydesdale and Belgian draft horses, rodeo stock, roping horses, brood stock, show horses and race horses.

Unfortunately due to recent economic and market pressures veterinarians in equine practice have seen an increase in requests for convenience or economically based euthanasia. A poll of Colorado Equine practitioners done in 2009 indicated a euthanasia request increase of 15% at that time and given our present economic state that number appears to be increasing. As cruel as this may sound, these beasts may be the fortunate ones. Many others are being neglected or simply abandoned, left to their own defenses without human care or proper nutrition.

As veterinarians who care deeply for the animals they serve and the people who own them we find this situation most troubling. The horse is unique among the livestock species. Their service to man and the historical bond between man and horse demands there be a better way of caring for these noble creatures and for a realistic solution for the citizens of Colorado.

SB 139 provides the basis of a solution for this problem. I urge you to support this bill as a beginning to the solution for the problem of the unwanted horse.