



Statement of Advocacy for Improved Conditions at Equine Rescue & Retirement Facilities

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Opportunities for Improved Operations of Horse Rescue Facilities in Kentucky

Horses living in rescue and retirement facilities could be assured of responsible care and adequate conditions through licensing and monitoring. Good intentions coupled with appropriate state oversight will ensure that displaced horses throughout the commonwealth receive proper rehabilitation and/or retirement. Horse owners and county officials surrendering animals could have a sure way to determine if a rescue is qualified to provide proper care and rehabilitation.

Background Facts

- There are 28 entities known to operate as equine rescue or retirement facilities in Kentucky
- 11 of the 28 rescues are known to be registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations
- 7 of the 28 organizations house only Thoroughbreds
- 5 of the 28 facilities provide lifetime care and/or retirement
- Kentucky equine rescue & retirement facilities are not regulated nor monitored
- Some rescue facilities operate without registering with the state (\$7 annual fee)
- Some rescue facilities adhere to the *AAEP Care Guidelines for Equine Rescue and Retirement Facilities* and/or *Basic Guidelines for Operating an Equine Rescue or Retirement Facility*
- Some rescue facilities establish a maximum capacity and operate under the limitations of a budget
- Some rescue facilities are funded solely by individuals
- A few rescue facilities operate beyond capacity and beyond the limitations of their funding
- Private horse owners and county officials sometimes have difficulty determining qualified rescues. Horses placed with unqualified rescues may suffer inadequate care.

Changes which would establish a minimum standard for equine rescue & retirement facilities:

- Require all equine rescue and retirement facilities to be licensed by the state
- Require all equine rescue and retirement facilities to adhere at a minimum to the *American Association of Equine Practitioners Care Guidelines for Equine Rescue and Retirement Facilities*
- Require all equine rescue and retirement facilities to have standard operating procedures including:
 - Mission statement
 - Defined maximum capacity
 - Care guidelines
 - Maintained records on each horse including a plan of recovery & chart of progress
 - Annual budget including identified sources of funding
 - Defined application process for adoptable horses
- Require all equine rescue and retirement facilities to be inspected annually by the state