

## Ban on Double Decker Horse Trailers Passes House Committee

**The Horse Transportation Safety Act of 2009 will now move to a vote of the full House of Representatives.**

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In 2007, a double-decker trailer carrying 59 Belgian horses in Illinois overturned when the driver ran a red light and hit another vehicle. Nine of the horses died on the scene and six were later euthanized due to their injuries.

In response to this and other incidents involving horses on double-decker trailers, U.S. Representative Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Steve Cohel (D-TN), introduced legislation to ban these trailers for use in transporting horses. The legislation, called the Horse Transportation Safety Act of 2009, has been passed by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Some states have already banned or attempted bans of the use of double-decker trailers for horse transport, but H.R. 305 would create a nationwide ban, covering all states and U.S. territories.

Double-decker trailers are intended for transporting shorter livestock such as cattle and pigs. Horses are generally too tall for the amount of space given. Horses also use their long necks for balance while in transit, but the low clearance in a double-decker trailer, sometimes less than 5', does not afford them sufficient space to raise their necks. The National Agriculture Safety Database recommends a minimum of 7-8 feet of clearance for horses in a trailer.

"It is time that we put an end to the inhumane practice of using double-decker trailers to transport horses," Rep. Kirk stated. "Stacking these animals one atop the other in a moving vehicle is simply an accident waiting to happen. It is not only a cruel way to transport horses, but it also puts human lives at risk."

The bill prohibits transporting horses "in a motor vehicle containing two or more levels stacked on top of one another." Violators would be fined \$100-\$500 per horse transported in a double-decker trailer. Had this law been in effect in 2007, those responsible for transporting the Belgian horses in Illinois could have been fined up to \$29,500.

The next step for the Horse Transportation Safety Act is to move to a vote of the full House, which is expected to happen after the House returns from recess in September.