

BISMARCK TRIBUNE
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Many of us who oppose the horse slaughterhouse study have a bone to pick with our elected officials in Bismarck. A number of concerned North Dakotans, and, yes, even people from other states and countries, have written and emailed North Dakota State Representatives to voice their opposition to HB 1496 which is studying the feasibility of bringing a foreign-owned horse slaughter plant to North Dakota.

Disappointingly, at least half of the North Dakota State Representatives contacted deleted their emails without even opening them. If those elected to represent their citizenry are unwilling to listen to a constituent's concerns about an issue, it is certainly a distressing illumination for North Dakota residents.

I was under the impression our elected officials represent not only our state, but its residents, as well. Apparently, I am mistaken. It appears our lawmakers have already made up their minds on this issue and are unwilling to consider another viewpoint. The Representative or Senator has acted as judge and jury on this, and presumably other issues, without considering testimony from both sides. Dissenting opinions or alternative perspectives have been dismissed without due consideration of the wishes of a portion of its electorate.

Furthermore, those opposed to horse slaughter have not felt safe presenting their views in a public forum. Threats to property, warning calls at home and hate-laced emails have been delivered in an effort to silence those who speak for the humane treatment of horses. Is this the manner in which we, as a civilized society, parley with those who do not support our personal outlook on an issue?

This is the most disheartening behavior I have ever witnessed. With apologies to William Shakespeare, "Something is rotten in Bismarck!" The slaughter lobby has advanced its own interests by persuading legislators they are seeking "humane treatment of unwanted horses." Unfortunately, the market opportunity to provide well-fleshed horses for the overseas meat market has been irresistible to willing and eager suppliers – a number of whom hold seats in our legislative body. A well-orchestrated campaign has effectively shut down the voices of the opposition. It is a sad day, indeed, when the almighty dollar outweighs the welfare of the animals that provide the sponsor of HB 1496 and others representing us in Bismarck with their livelihoods.

Bully for North Dakota – The Peace Garden State AND perhaps soon to be the Horse Slaughter state as well! Or is the real message "North Dakota – Bully Those Who Don't Conform"?

By Alison Smith