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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I have approved S. 811 which provides amendments to
the Horse Protection Act of 1970.

This Act is intended to ban the clearly inhumane
practice of intentionally injuring the limbs and hoofs
of horses in order to induce the high-stepping gait
looked for in certain horse show events.

The amendments contained in S. 811 strengthen the
Act in some respects. Unfortunately, however, the approach
that the Congress continues to take to eradicate this
heinous practice fails to comprehend the real problem.

The practice exists, quite simply, because its per-
petrators can make a profit in the horse show circuit by
short-cutting the careful breeding and patient training
techniques which are normally required to produce high
quality show prospects. Until the management of public
horse shows and sales assumes -- or is forced by law to
assume -- the responsibility of ensuring that these
cruelties are not being practiced upon those horses tak-
ing part in their sponsored events, real reform will not
be assured.

The Department of Agriculture urged the Congress to
place the onus on the industry where it belongs, rather
than upon Federal regulators. The proposal would have
required that the management of every show put in place
an inspection system -- using independent, qualified
inspectors -- under penalty of law. The Department could
then monitor the industry to ensure that the system
operated properly. However, the Congress -- in a mistaken
belief that the addition of more Federal enforcement offi-
cials will solve the problem -- has ignored the real problem
and simply authorized more money and stiffened penalties.

I continue to be committed to achieving meaningful
reform by compelling this industry to police itself
properly. To that end I pledge cooperation with the
Congress in seeking continued improvements in the law
which will place the primary responsibility for en-
forcement with the industry itself.

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