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## KY Equine Welfare Bill Passes House

by *Blood-Horse Staff*

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Legislation that will enhance the health and welfare of the horse passed the Kentucky House of Representatives Feb. 25 on a bipartisan vote of 98-0. House Bill 398, sponsored by Democratic Rep. Tom McKee, will now be considered by the state Senate.

“This legislation is moving forward with strong bipartisan support,” said Dr. Frank Dwayne Marcum, an equine veterinarian from Versailles and president of the Kentucky-based Equine Health and Welfare Alliance, in a release. “To our knowledge, no other organization in the U.S. has brought before a state legislature specific, focused equine health and welfare identification and reform that offers the chance for real solutions.”

House Bill 398 will create the Kentucky Equine Health and Welfare Board under the Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet to assist, advise, and consult with the cabinet on issues of equine health and welfare and will take action to help maintain the health, welfare, and safety of equines in the Commonwealth. The bill will also create an equine health and welfare trust fund to be administered by the Board to promote equine health, welfare, and safety.

“From the pony in the backyard to the winner of the Kentucky Derby, the horse is special in this state,” said McKee, a Harrison County farmer, in a statement. “It is our signature animal. This bill is a step toward improving the health and welfare of the horse.”

Co-sponsoring the bipartisan legislation are Democratic Reps. Royce Adams, Charlie Hoffman, Don Pasley, Kent Stevens, Susan Westrom, Wilson Stone; and Republican Rep. Ron Crimm.

The bill is the first major initiative of the newly formed Equine Health and Welfare Alliance, a Kentucky-based non-profit corporation dedicated to the proper care, maintenance, and treatment of the horse and all equines.

Organized by a group of leading equine veterinarians, EHWA is dedicated to improving the care and welfare of equines. While the core membership and origin of EHWA consists of veterinarians, the Alliance is not limited to veterinarians and welcomes the involvement of other individuals, organizations, philanthropies, and companies interested in improving the welfare of the horse.

“This bill is focused solely on the horse,” said Dr. Doug Byars, a veterinarian and founding member of the EHWA from Georgetown, Ky. “The groups, organizations, and individuals that work on behalf of the horse in Kentucky have come together to support this legislation and this effort.”

For more information, and to follow the progress of HB 398, visit [www.equinehealthandwelfare.org](http://www.equinehealthandwelfare.org).

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