



Concerns About Colorado's SB21-135 are Significant.

Watch out participants in rodeo, livestock shows, and horse events in Colorado, SB21-135 is not to be taken lightly. It sets a dangerous precedent and if voted in, could hinder your ability to travel with your animals sooner than you may expect.

Colorado Senate Bill SB21-135 should be genuinely concerning to anyone competing with, showing, or exhibiting animals – even the species that are currently listed as exempt. It is easy and common to amend Acts once they are passed into law. Excluded becomes included with the stroke of a pen.

Think about this for a moment, if your animals were not an excluded species, would this verbiage concern you?

- (a) "CAUSE A PERFORMANCE" MEANS TO ALLOW FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF AN ANIMAL IN A PERFORMANCE, TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR A PERFORMANCE, TO FINANCIALLY BENEFIT AS AN OWNER OR OPERATOR FROM A PERFORMANCE, TO FINANCIALLY BENEFIT AS A PERSON WHO OWNS OR CONTROLS A PROPERTY USED FOR A PERFORMANCE, OR TO USE ANY MEANS OF COMMUNICATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING A PERFORMANCE ON BEHALF OF THE OWNER OR OPERATOR OF A PERFORMANCE OR THE VENUE FOR A PERFORMANCE.

What about this?

- (c) "PERFORMANCE" MEANS ANY ANIMAL ACT, CIRCUS, RIDE, CARNIVAL, PARADE, RACE, PERFORMANCE, OR SIMILAR UNDERTAKING IN WHICH ANIMALS ARE: (I) REQUIRED TO PERFORM TRICKS, GIVE RIDES, OR PARTICIPATE AS ACCOMPANIMENTS FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT, AMUSEMENT, OR BENEFIT OF AN AUDIENCE; OR (II) USED PRIMARILY FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC PURPOSES.
- (d) "TRAVELING ANIMAL ACT" MEANS ANY PERFORMANCE OF AN ANIMAL WHERE THE ANIMAL IS TRANSPORTED TO, FROM, OR BETWEEN LOCATIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE PERFORMANCE.

Western Justice is a collaborating voice empowering the future of the Western Horse Industry. We are committed to upholding the rights and liberties of breeders, owners, trainers, and exhibitors while ensuring the welfare of livestock and our way of life.

There are already strict animal welfare laws in Colorado. There are also very few traveling circuses and animal acts using non-exempt species – they have already been unwarranted targets for a long time. This Bill is neither needed nor purposeful.

We have it on good authority that the species exempted in this version were not originally exempted in the 2020 version. A large association raised concerns about it and the exemptions were added. The original intention was to include livestock.

This begs the questions - why does this exemption of horses and cattle woo so many into a feeling of safety? Why don't we see the writing on the wall? Why do we fall for the rhetoric spewed by extremist groups and shoveled into law by their darlings? 99.99% of animal owners care very much for the welfare of their animals, especially if they have a business and their livelihood wrapped up in them – regardless of species. Do we think the animal extremist groups care more about our species than the ones they openly attack? No, more likely, it is humorous to them that they can placate the large industries like horses and other livestock into standing idly by while they take out smaller industries. It has been a long-time tactic to divide and conquer – many a battle has been won that way. Maybe you remember some other “low hanging fruit” like Barnum & Baileys, Florida greyhound racing, and Tennessee Walking Horses – all maliciously attacked by some slick marketing campaigns to an uneducated public while the rest of the animal industries stood on the sideline.

It is easy to take out the “low hanging fruit” first. The thing we fail to recognize is that once that fruit gets picked, there is a “next low hanging fruit” and it will be us sooner than we think if we do not stand up for animal ownership now. The ideology behind legislation like this is the eventual removal of all animals in human care – all, no matter the species, use, or care they receive.

So, we encourage people to speak up, educate their legislators, and share their concerns with the leadership of their livestock and horse show organizations. Ask them to write letters on company letterhead. Please consider contacting both the sponsors of the bill and the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.

When communicating with legislators, please be respectful and share your personal stories to add-credence to your concerns. Calling seems to work better than emailing, so do both!

Western Justice Legislative Fund is a membership based C4 non-profit organization engaging in political action to preserve and protect the western lifestyle.

Joining Western Justice puts our team's years of experience to work writing professionally researched and timely articles, keeping abreast of legislation as it affects the western horse industry and affords our team to lobby/advocate for the western horse industry in all levels of government.

Links:


Western Justice: www.westernjustice.info

SB21-135 and its prime sponsors to contact: <http://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb21-135>

Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee: <http://leg.colorado.gov/committees/agriculture-natural-resources/2021-regular-session>

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