

to dispose of animals they no longer want. Others, however, are consigned by caring owners who simply have no idea of the fate awaiting the animals.

Additionally, hundreds—perhaps thousands—of horses are stolen each year. Horse thieves make fast money by unloading their stolen bounty to jobbers or slaughterhouses, which typically kill and process the animals within 24 hours, making it virtually impossible to trace and recover the stolen animals in time.

Currently, there are foreign-owned slaughterhouses operating in the United States that slaughter horses for human consumption. They are Beltex Corporation in Ft. Worth, Texas; Dallas Crown in Kaufman, Texas and Cavel International in DeKalb, Illinois. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 65,976 horses were slaughtered in 2004, up from 50,564 the previous year. In addition, thousands more horses are transported under deplorable conditions across our borders to Canada and Mexico to face a similar fate.

Conditions of transport can be brutal. It is not unusual for horses to be hauled for more than 24 hours without rest, water or food in trailers that provide little protection from the elements. Many horses—sick, lame, pregnant or blind—are in distress even before being loaded.

Once at the slaughterhouse, the suffering gets worse. Horses are left for long periods in tightly packed trailers, subjected to further extremes of heat and cold. In hot weather, thirst is acute. Downed animals are unable to rise. All the horses are moved off forcibly when it's time to unload and hurried through the facility into the kill box. In the face of these deplorable conditions, including overcrowding, deafening noise, and the smell of blood, the horses typically become desperate, exhibiting fear typical of "flight" behavior—pacing in prance-like movements with their ears pinned back against their heads and eyes wide open.

Despite the Federal mandate that horses be rendered unconscious before being put to death, many horses are killed alive by re-

peated blows to the head with captive bolt pistols. While writhing in pain, the coupe de grace is administered by a slit of the throat. The dead animal is then processed for shipment overseas and destined for a foreign dining table.

Mr. Chairman, I support this legislation because I do not wish to sanction the abuse of another noble creature of the American West. The magnificent buffaloes that at one time roamed the Great Plains were killed by too many settlers and pioneers for sport when they should have been used the way they were by Native Americans—for food and clothing and fuel. How ironic it is that horses—magnificent, powerful, graceful, and athletic—are being used for food instead of sport and husbandry.

Mr. Chairman, I support H.R. 503 because it bans the shipping, transporting, moving, delivering, receiving, possessing, purchasing, selling, or donation of horses and other equines to be slaughtered for human consumption. This is not a fitting end to the animal that has played such an important role in defining American character and culture. I urge my colleagues to join me in protecting an enduring symbol of the West and the favorite animal of Americans everywhere. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 503.

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TRIBUTE TO DICK AND GINI  
BRITTON

**HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 8, 2006*

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor and acknowledge Dick and Gini Britton as they celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary, September 4, 2006.

Dick and Gini are a loving couple committed to improving the lives of Michigan citizens.

Over the years, their friends and family have watched as their friendship blossomed into a

relationship of mutual respect, love, and fulfillment. It began during the mid-1970s, when their friends Mike and Mary Sedlak arranged a dinner date for the couple-to-be. Soon, a relationship ensued, Dick and Gini fell in love, and they married on September 4, 1976.

Their first home was in Dearborn, Michigan, where they lived with their dog, Erin. By the end of the decade, the couple had moved to Commerce Township and bore their first child, Michelle, in 1980. In 1985, their second daughter, Bridget, was born and the family moved to Northville Township a year later.

Dissatisfied with the Northville Township Board of Trustees, Gini decided to make a difference by entering public service; she was elected to the Board in the early 1990s, where we initially met. Her dedication to the citizens of Northville continued even after moving to Oxford, Michigan, during the spring of 1999. For several years after they moved, Gini still ordered the local newspaper, the Northville Record, to maintain her awareness of Northville current events. Currently, Gini serves as a political consultant for the Oxford Rotary and member of the Oxford Women's Club. In addition, Dick is a member of the Knights of Columbus and has loyally worked at the manufacturing representative firm, Terry Barr Sales, for 30 years. Last year, as Gini battled breast cancer, Dick supportively stood by her side through chemotherapy and at every major consultation or procedure until she defeated the disease.

Mr. Speaker, this loving family has touched the lives of so many individuals across Michigan. Gini Britton's legendary commitment to promoting effective governance is a testament to her moral and compassionate character. For three decades, Dick and Gina have shown an unwavering and selfless dedication to their family, their friends, and to each other. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary and in honoring them for their years of unfaltering service to our community and our country.