

**House Transportation, Housing & Local Government**

**04/01/2025 Upon Adjournment**

**SB25-149 Local Government Duties Equestrian Protections**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Herbert Poppe For themselves	As a horse rider and owner of many years, I support this amendment!
Roland Halpern For themselves	<p>My name is Roland Halpern and although I am the executive director of Colorado Voters for Animals, today I am submitting testimony on behalf of myself.</p> <p>Back when the west was young, people knew how to behave around horses. But that was then. These days I hike more than ride and many of the trails I am on are shared by equestrians. I know enough that when a rider is approaching, I should stop, take a step to the side, and wait until the horse has passed. But I've seen other hikers that keep walking forward, and even cyclists who ride towards the horse while ringing a bell. Ignorance may be bliss, but not when it involves a horse. I don't think these people are intentionally trying to upset the horse or its rider, they just don't know any better because they have never learned equine etiquette. Part of this bill addresses exactly that, how to behave around a horse so that everyone is safe. I hope you will vote yes on this bill to protect horses, riders and pedestrians.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Roland Halpern</p>
Lydia Andrews-Jones For themselves	<p>Dear Committee Members:</p> <p>My name is Lydia Andrews-Jones, and I am writing in support of the Equestrian Protections Bill SB25-149. I am a 4th generation Coloradoan whose family has always been involved with horses. My grandfather bred draft mules that were used to haul freight all over the Colorado Mountains and quite literally helped to build many of Colorado's mountain towns. As a child growing up in Golden Gate Canyon outside of Golden, Colorado my friends and I thought nothing of riding our horses into Golden, or Central City, of Golden Gate State Park. Today that would be impossible. Trails that accommodate horses can accommodate other users, but the reverse is not always true. This bill asks that equestrians be able to continue to use the trails they have always used, with planners listening to the needs of equestrians so that use of the trails by equestrians is possible. A great example is the Ralston Creek Trail which is</p>

	<p>supposed to be an equestrian use trail – but many of the tunnels under roads are too short to allow a horse to pass, and there is no safe road crossing at surface level. Trail crossings with buttons for pedestrians to cross roads safely are not at the right height to reach from the back of a horse. Dismounting and remounting a horse can be the most dangerous part of a ride; most horses are more easily controlled while mounted.</p> <p>Equestrians also need consideration and safety on the roads. Collisions between cars and horses almost always result in the death of the horse, and maybe the rider, and both the rider and the driver of the car can be seriously injured. As our society becomes increasingly urbanized, people are less aware of the behavior of large animals like horses, and no longer know how to act around them. This bill increases driver awareness of horses, gives them instructions how to behave properly, and protects everybody; drivers included.</p> <p>Horses are a passion and a lifestyle for many Coloradoans, myself included. I patrol on horseback for Jefferson County Open Space (volunteer), and the excitement and joy that I see in so many faces, just for the opportunity to see a horse, warms my heart every time I go out. I hear over and over how excited people are to see my horse out on trail, and even more so to get to interact with her. I hear the stories about how many people who don't own a horse, still love them so much, many of them having had lessons in childhood, or who just go to see horses because they enjoy them so much. The human race is just beginning to recognize the amazing contribution horses make to our well-being with horse therapy programs on the rise. I personally have witnessed the miracle of a non-verbal autistic child finally speaking their first sentence, all due to spending time with a horse. These beautiful, patient, majestic creatures have been mankind's partner on so many human endeavors and they, and the people who love them, deserve consideration for a place in the future of this state.</p> <p>Please vote yes on this bill SB25-149.</p>
<p>Kaitlin Spak For Arvada Area Horseman's Association</p>	<p>My name is Dr. Kaitlin Spak, and I am writing on behalf of the Arvada Area Horseman's Association as its Vice President (and myself as a Colorado equestrian!) to express strong support for Senate Bill 25-149.</p> <p>This bill is NOT about imposing difficult rules or mandating expensive infrastructure—it is about educating the public about equestrian safety and empowering communities to recognize equestrian amenities and access as a valued part of our towns and cities. For generations, equestrians have played a meaningful role in Colorado's history, economy, and way of life. Especially in the areas we seek to protect, equestrians continue to contribute through support of local businesses and maintenance of agricultural interests and open space that benefits everyone. Yet, as Colorado grows and develops, equestrians are often left out of planning decisions, leading to diminishing access, higher concentrations of horses at fewer facilities, increased safety risks due to interactions between large animals and the often-unaware public, and eventual erosion of a vital part of our state's culture.</p>

	<p>SB 25-149 provides a path forward. It ensures that equestrians have a seat at the table when decisions are made about infrastructure, land use, and transportation in the communities where we have long been a presence and simply seek to maintain existing facilities. This is not just about protecting a tradition—it is about securing the future of an industry that supports jobs, tourism, community engagement, and outdoor recreation. In places like Arvada, where I live and ride, horse owners and riders face increasing challenges as urban development expands, and horses have given their lives in place of their riders in vehicle accidents. Even in more rural places like Ault, the rise of folks unfamiliar with equestrian safety has led to tragic road accidents.</p> <p>Thus, another key aspect of this bill is education. Drivers and equestrians alike deserve to travel safely. Too often, motorists are unsure how to share the road with horses, leading to dangerous encounters. This bill helps create avenues for public education, emphasizing the importance of passing horses wide and slow, a mantra being embraced around the world, from New Zealand to the United Kingdom, to prevent accidents and save lives.</p> <p>Supporting this bill means supporting a future where equestrians can continue to contribute to Colorado’s communities, economy, and landscape. Please help us ensure that that our equestrian colleagues and businesses stay in Colorado by echoing our governor’s recent appreciation of March as Horse Protection Month in Colorado and voting yes on SB 25-149!</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<p>Louis Calkin For themselves</p>	<p>My name is Louis Calkin and I'm a senior in high school. I am for this bill because if the situation for equestrians, ranchers and farmers degrade even further I will likely have to leave the state. I have been nearly hit Many times and since Indiana State Highway in Arvada is a state highway, this is a state issue. Many around me wish they could ride the trails and drive the roads but equestrians aren't protected. Everyone should be able to pursue their happiness and I believe the current situation is unconstitutional as developers push out agriculture and equestrians! Equines are my life and my purpose and If I or anyone else cannot pursue our happiness in our chosen careers , Colorado will loose much of its' value.</p>