



## **EDITORIAL | Senator Baucus dons his horse slaughter suicide vest**

*by John Holland, president, Equine Welfare Alliance*

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### **Senator Baucus dons his horse slaughter suicide vest**

Newspapers from coast to coast are carrying stories about doomed Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) pleading for the Congress to bring horse slaughter back to America. Baucus is calling for an end to a ban on the funding of USDA horse slaughter inspections that has kept the industry out of America since 2007. In doing so Baucus is taking part in a growing tradition of political penance for disgraced members of the secretive horse slaughter caucus, one of the few remaining bipartisan institutions of Congress.

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Senator Larry Craig became the first victim of the caucus when he was arrested in a restroom of the Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport for soliciting sex from an undercover officer. The incident was made all the more embarrassing by the fact that Craig had long crusaded against all forms of gay rights.

His career doomed, Craig (R-ID) was called upon to do his penance. Instead of resigning and slithering out of the searing glare of the public spot light, he was made to finish out his term as a senatorial road block against the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act.

Thus Craig stood in the contemptuous gaze of his fellow senators and refused to allow the bill forward by denying "unanimous consent". Now it is Senator Max Baucus' turn to don his political suicide vest and go out in a final act of obedience to his keepers.

A career politician, Max Baucus was first elected to the Senate in 1978. He is up for re-election in 2012, but there is a roadside bomb waiting for his campaign to drive by and his keepers in Washington must know it will almost certainly be fatal.

In December of 2009, a video was uploaded to YouTube showing Senator Baucus ranting about the lack of support Republicans provided on the health care debate in what appears to be an advanced state of inebriation. The six minute [video](#) shows the Senator gesturing wildly as he condemns his opponents in a slurred, stuttering, rambling, repetitious harangue.

During the video, Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) attempts to defend the opposition in an almost overly polite rebuttal, but Senator Max Baucus virtually shouts him down in "reclaiming his time".

Although the YouTube video has been viewed almost 2 million times, the mainstream media has largely given the good Senator a pass on his performance. Never-the-less, it is certain to be irresistible ammunition for Baucus' opponent in the upcoming election and the inevitable attack ads will make it front page news.

One can only imagine the campaign ads against Baucus featuring one of the many juicy tidbits from the video and asking rhetorical questions like why we set a lower standard for piloting our government than we do for operating a moped.

In 2006, then Senator George Allen (R-VA) was captured on a YouTube video calling a staffer of his opponent, a young man of Indian descent, by the racial epithet "macaca". That single word doomed Allen's campaign, and demonstrated the political lethality of YouTube. What waits for Baucus is likely far more damning.

Enter the horse slaughter lobby. It has plenty of money from animal agriculture and organizations within the horse industry like the American Quarter Horse Association who profit from horse slaughter. What the horse slaughter lobby lacks are elected officials willing to sacrifice votes by leading the charge for an industry that 3/4ths of American voters believe is abominable.

Law making has often been compared with sausage manufacturing because it is such an unsavory process to watch. But like a sausage manufacturer, our political machine wastes nothing, including the political carcasses of Craig and Baucus.

Thus Baucus dutifully waves a laughable GAO (General Accountability Office) [report](#) over his head and stands stoically in the limelight as he professes his support for returning horse slaughter to America. Only decades in the Congressional sausage factory could equip a politician with the moral ambivalence required to carry out this final duty for the dark forces that have quietly nurtured him in their bosoms for so long.

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**Contact Information:** John Holland | 540.268.2693 | [john@equinewelfarealliance.org](mailto:john@equinewelfarealliance.org)

**[www.equinewelfarealliance.org](http://www.equinewelfarealliance.org)**