

# HORSEMEN'S COUNCIL OF ILLINOIS

Fall 2023

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

*The State of the Equine in Illinois*

## THE YEAR AHEAD

PO Box 13374  
Springfield, IL 62791



# PRESIDENT'S LETTER from HCI President Paula Briney

I can't believe that it has been two years since we have produced a printed newsletter!

The Horseman's Council of Illinois has gone through many changes over the past year. We thank Tracey Walker, our Administrator, for the superb job she has done for HCI and the Illinois Equine Foundation.

Unfortunately, we ended up canceling the 2023 Illinois Horse Fair due to construction on the Coliseum at the Illinois State Fairgrounds, and now it appears we are canceling the 2024 Illinois Horse Fair as well. That being said, we have diligently been working on how to continue our mission statement of education and promotion of the equine industry within Illinois.

As you read further in this newsletter, you'll learn about our new educational webinar series. We are excited to move forward with a license plate decal program to celebrate horses in Illinois. Additionally, we are working on a series of speed events across the state with the finals later in 2024. We are still finalizing the details, so stay tuned for more information to come.

We look forward to welcoming new board members to help HCI continue to be the leader of the equine community within Illinois. Do you have fresh ideas to bring to the HCI board? See page 3 to apply to join the HCI board of directors.

It takes a village to keep our lifestyle alive. Please renew your membership, let your regional director know if there are local issues affecting equestrians in your part of the state, and participate in the volunteer opportunities available.

Thank you to all of you who volunteer your time and knowledge. Keep up the great work!

I hope everyone had a great fall!! *Paula*



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## HORSEMEN'S COUNCIL OF ILLINOIS

# Annual Meeting

**Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 7 p.m.  
CST via ZOOM**



Register using the QR code or the Bitly URL to receive the Zoom link to join us!

[bit.ly/HCIAnnualMeeting2023](https://bit.ly/HCIAnnualMeeting2023)



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS****PRESIDENT**

Paula Briney SANGAMON COUNTY

**FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT**

Dennis French, DVM CHAMPAIGN COUNTY

**SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT**

Tony Troyer LASALLE COUNTY

**SECRETARY**

Russ Derango MCLEAN COUNTY

**TREASURER**

David Nobbe KANE COUNTY

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Deborah Bonner SANGAMON COUNTY

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**ADMINISTRATOR**

Tracey Walker SANGAMON COUNTY

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

PO Box 13374 • Springfield, IL 62791

217-689-4224

[hci@horsemencouncil.org](mailto:hci@horsemencouncil.org)[horsemencouncil.org](http://horsemencouncil.org)**JOIN THE HCI BOARD OF DIRECTORS TODAY TO HELP SHAPE TOMORROW FOR ILLINOIS EQUINES AND THEIR OWNERS**

Are you passionate about horses and the equine lifestyle? Are you ready to make a lasting impact on the Illinois equine community? If your answer is YES, we invite you to join the Horsemen's Council of Illinois board of directors and help ensure the future of Illinois horses and those who have chosen to have a career or participate recreationally in the equine industry.

***Why Become an HCI Board Member?***Support Your Local Equine Community

*HCI strives for equal representation of horse owners across the state. You will meet with your local horse community, and represent and advocate for their needs and concerns. Whether facing a zoning issue, concerns about equestrian amenities in the area, or sharing an upcoming local event, HCI wants to know about it and offer support. You will represent HCI as the statewide voice of the Illinois equine industry on local issues and directly influence the lives of friends, family, and community in your region of Illinois.*

Connect and Collaborate

*Joining the HCI board means networking with like-minded individuals across the state and around the country who share your passion for horses and the equine lifestyle while exchanging new ideas and best practices, and establishing meaningful connections in the equine world.*

Influence Change

*This is your chance to help shape legislation, policies, initiatives, and programs affecting the way the equine industry operates and how horses are cared for in Illinois.*



HCI is only as strong as its members, and we want to tap into the collective wisdom and experience of Illinois horsepeople like you.

You must be a current member of HCI to be eligible to serve on the board of directors. If you are interested, email us at [hci@horsemencouncil.org](mailto:hci@horsemencouncil.org) with your contact information and personal and/or professional biography, including your equine experience, no later than **November 25, 2023**.



## APRIL 2023 SPRING FLING IN DUQUOIN

The ongoing Phase 2 renovations of the iconic Coliseum at the Illinois State Fairgrounds – including installing new HVAC and a new elevator, upgrading the spectator seating, remodeling of show offices and bathrooms, and more – prompted HCI to explore opportunities to host different equine events in other parts of the state. So when in doubt . . . head south!

On April 28-30, HCI hosted the IPRA-rated Wooten Rodeo and Fairgrounds Showdown Youth Speed Challenge at the historic DuQuoin State Fairgrounds in southern Illinois. This event was co-sponsored by Landers Iron Saddle Ranch, Illinois Farm Bureau, Midway Trailer Sales, and the Illinois Equine Research and Promotions Board.



HCI hosted the first evening of the Wooten Rodeo on Friday, April 28. We saw a full rough-stock rodeo, including steer wrestling, women's breakaway roping, and calf roping with everyone in attendance sitting on the edge of their seats! Cowboys and cowgirls came from 12 states to compete and put on two action-packed nights of entertainment.

Saturday, April 29 dawned clear and crisp for the Youth Speed Challenge Fairground Showdown at the SI Center Arena. Serious riders in senior, junior, and pee-wee divisions on beautiful, well-trained horses competed in barrels, figure 8, poles, and goat tying to cheers and encouragement from family members and friends in attendance. We welcomed vendors from across the state. Saturday evening, the Wooten Rodeo entertained an excited crowd, starting with rodeo clown antics before getting down to the rodeo competition.

Sunday, April 30, we wrapped up the Youth Speed Challenge Fairground Showdown with the finalists from each event on Saturday vying for the grand prizes of trophy saddles and saddle pads HCI sourced from Double D Western Wear and Tack. The Rock River Trail and Horseman Association was one of the sponsors of this event.

Many of the participants told us it was wonderful to participate in an HCI event closer to home by being able to commute to the fairgrounds instead of incurring the additional expense of hotels and stabling fees. We also thank all the volunteers who helped us successfully run the event.

We hope to see many of you at future events around the state, and we are always open to feedback and new ideas. Is there a new venue in your area that would be perfect for an event or show? Are you known across multiple counties for organizing the best fun shows? Email us at [hci@horsemencouncil.org](mailto:hci@horsemencouncil.org) to share your ideas with us!





## ILLINOIS HORSE FAIR 2024 CANCELLED DUE TO COLISEUM CONSTRUCTION

### ONGOING CONSTRUCTION AT THE STATE FAIRGROUNDS COLISEUM FORCES IHF CANCELLATION FOR THE SECOND YEAR

The Horsemen's Council of Illinois (HCI) regrettably announces the cancellation of the 2024 Illinois Horse Fair, a pivotal annual event for horse enthusiasts in Illinois.

The schedule of ongoing renovations at the Illinois State Fairgrounds' Coliseum, an integral venue for our fair, presents too many uncertainties about its readiness for our March 1-3, 2024 dates.

The Coliseum has been central to our event, hosting numerous clinics, rodeos, demonstrations, and other segments. Given the construction status and our commitment to ensuring a premium experience, HCI has opted to prioritize the safety and logistics of all involved. We understand this decision deeply affects our vendors, demonstrators, equestrian professionals, and all of the eager attendees, and sincerely apologize for any inconvenience caused.

HCI is thankful for the unwavering support from our attendees and stakeholders while facing these challenges.

We look forward to seeing everyone back in Springfield for Illinois Horse Fair on March 7-9, 2025!



# SADDLE UP FOR LEARNING: EXCITING EQUINE WEBINARS AHEAD!

## HCI launched a new webinar series in 2023

The Horsemen's Council of Illinois (HCI) launched its brand-new webinar series in 2023 as part of our ongoing mission to provide our members with up-to-date knowledge and best practices. HCI's latest offering brings world-class speakers to the horse owners and caregivers of Illinois.



*Robyn Stewart M.S.*

The series launched with three comprehensive classes on equine nutrition. Presented by Robyn Stewart, an award-winning faculty member at the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension, this series covered Forage and Pasture, Feeds and Concentrates, and Supplements.

Hannah Galantino-Homer, VMD, PhD, DACT, was the Senior Research Investigator in Laminitis at New Bolton Center, the large animal campus of Penn Vet School in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania from 2007 to 2022. She gave a thorough presentation on why horses get laminitis, a complex and serious medical condition that can affect a horse temporarily or for the rest of its life.

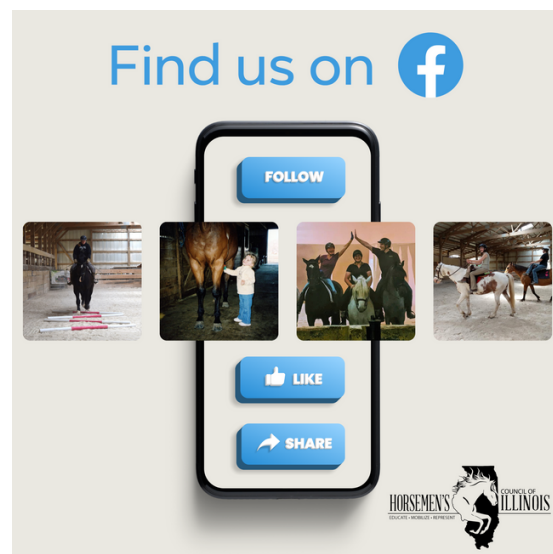


*Hannah Galantino-Homer  
VMD, PhD, DACT*

All of the webinars are free. And for those who might miss a live session, there's no need to worry. Each webinar is recorded and uploaded to the members-only section of the HCI website, ensuring that all members have access to this invaluable resource whenever they wish to tap into it.

HCI knows the strength and relevance of such an educational series come not just from the quality of the speakers – we want to make sure we are finding speakers on topics that you want to learn more about!

If you have an idea, suggestion, or a topic you'd like to see covered in upcoming webinars, or have recently heard an amazing speaker that you think would provide valuable information for horse owners across the state, please send us an email at [hci@horsemencouncil.org](mailto:hci@horsemencouncil.org).





# HCI REGION MAP

**Connect with your regional HCI director and get involved today!**

## Supporting Associations

Equestrian Coalition of McHenry County	Bull Valley Riding Club
Illinois Boots & Saddle Club	Arab Inc.
Illinois Draft Horse & Mule Association	Centerline Dressage
Illinois Harness Horsemen's Association	Chestnut Hill Farm
Lake County Mounted Posse	Crosswinds Farm
Marshall Putnam Trail Riders	IL/IN Chapter, NACMO
McHenry County Horse Club	Matchmaker Ltd. Equine
Mid-America Horse Show Association	Platinum Hill Farm
Riding Club of Barrington Hills	Prairie Trail Riders
Upper Midwest Endurance & Competitive Ride Association - UMECRA	Shawnee Trail Conservancy

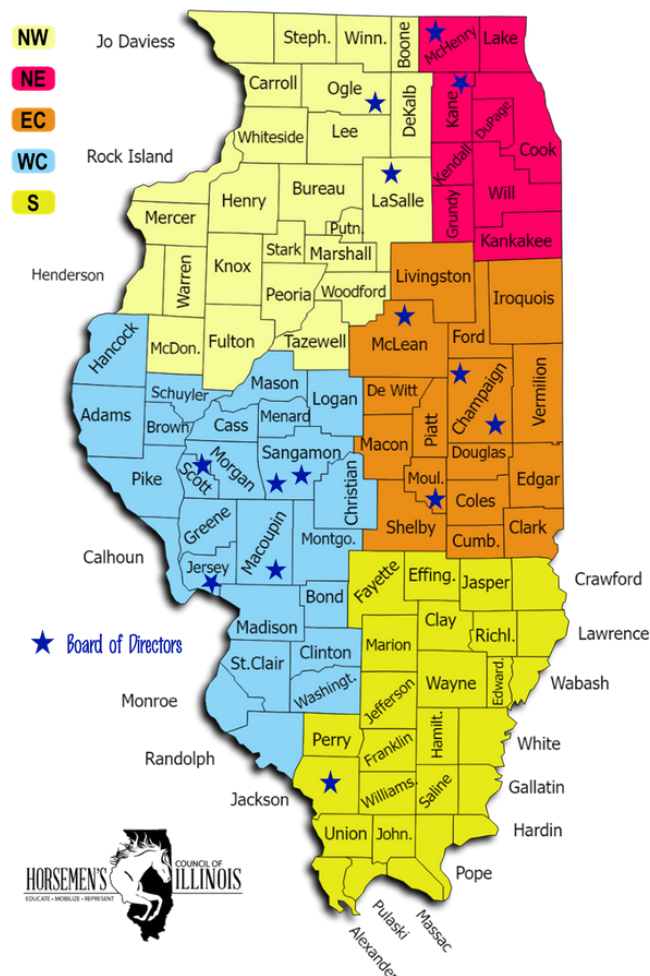
## Non-Profit Organization Members

Hooved Animal Humane Society (HAHS)	Back Country Horsemen
Hooved Animal Rescue and Protection Society (HARPS)	
Main Stay Therapeutic Farm	Sol's Legacy Ministries
Rock River Trail & Horseman Association	Westwood Trail Riders
SOUL Harbour Ranch Animal Therapy Program	

## Lifetime Members

Bingham Quarter Horses	Carson's Hidden Acres
Crouch's Belgians	FBI Buildings
Libertyville Saddle Shop/Dover Saddlery	Foxtail Farm
Moser Tack & Saddle	Glenmore Farm
S&H Arena	Nasiopoulos Farm
	Pratense Farm
	Sommers Gate Farm
	Triangle H Farm

VISIT [HCI.WILDAPRICOT.ORG/JOIN](https://www.hciwildapricot.org/join) TO JOIN AS  
A SUPPORTING ASSOCIATION OR NFP AND HAVE  
YOUR ORGANIZATION LISTED ON THE HCI WEBSITE.



### Region 1 - Northwest (NW)

Counties: Boone, Bureau, Carroll, DeKalb, Fulton, Henderson, Henry, Jo Daviess, Knox, LaSalle, Lee, Marshall, McDonough, Mercer, Ogle, Peoria, Putnam, Rock Island, Stark, Stephenson, Tazewell, Warren, Whiteside, Winnebago, Woodford

### Region 2 - Northeast (NE)

Counties: Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, Will

### Region 3 - West Central (WC)

Counties: Adams, Bond, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Christian, Clinton, Green, Hancock, Jersey, Logan, Macoupin, Madison, Mason, Menard, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Pike, Randolph, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, St. Clair, Washington

### Region 4 - East Central (EC)

Counties: Champaign, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, Macon, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt, Shelby, Vermillion

### Region 5 - South (S)

Counties: Alexander, Clay, Crawford, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Lawrence, Marion, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Richland, Saline, Union, Wabash, Wayne, White, Williamson

**IF YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS AN UPCOMING MEETING OR EVENT AND WOULD LIKE A DIRECTOR FROM HCI TO ATTEND. PLEASE CONTACT THE HCI OFFICE TO CHECK YOUR REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S AVAILABILITY.**

# ILLINOIS TRAIL STATUS

## Equestrian community rallies against land clearing in northern Illinois.

In Northern Illinois (IDNR Region 1), several equestrian and non-equestrian sites have undergone extensive land clearing over the past three years. Notably, at Franklin Creek State Natural Area in Franklin Grove, Illinois, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) recently cleared approximately 15 acres of land, removing all trees except oaks and hickories to establish a prairie and plant native grasses and wildflowers.

Concerns from local equestrians arose in 2021 when the initial 10-acre clearing occurred without prior notice. The Rock River Trail and Horseman Association (RRTHA) and HCI board members Tony Troyer and Brad Hubbard initiated inquiries during a September 2021 town hall meeting for Region 1 equestrian sites. However, no information was provided by IDNR about the significant impact on trails and the landscape.

Subsequently, HCI engaged in discussions with IDNR. RRTHA members even visited the Nachusa Grasslands north of Franklin Creek State Natural Area to understand the IDNR's objectives better. While the goal of eradicating invasive species was clear, there was confusion regarding the complete removal of all maple species and the expansion of the prairie.

Fast forward to 2023, when the IDNR informed stakeholders about another clearing project on the western border of the equestrian area. RRTHA board member Steve Merrell met with the Site Supervisor and Heritage Biologist to discuss the project, yet transparency remained limited. HCI, RRTHA, and the Franklin Creek Conservation Association (FCCA) expressed concerns about how this project would alter the user *continued...*

Before you head out on the trails, make sure you know where you're going! The Horsemen's Council of Illinois can help you find new trails, amenities, and resources anywhere in Illinois to help you enjoy the beauty of our state's natural resources with your family, friends, and horse.

**HANDBOOK OF EQUESTRIAN TRAILS, CAMPS, AND SERVICES**

2021 EDITION

Member Price: \$25  
Non-Member Price: \$35  
+ shipping

Visit [horsemencouncil.org](https://horsemencouncil.org) to purchase your trail guide today!



## ILLINOIS TRAIL STATUS (cont.)

experience, particularly by clearing maples and hackberries, which are typical in the area's low-lying regions.

These groups collectively contacted local representatives for assistance, with Representative Bradley Frits visiting the trails and meeting with IDNR to understand their plans for Franklin Creek State Natural Area. The main question was why IDNR deemed it justifiable to completely eliminate an entire ecosystem based on a 1930s aerial photo as their primary evidence.

Despite ongoing discussions, the equestrians and FCCA remain dissatisfied with the project's outcomes, which expanded beyond initial expectations. IDNR described the project as more of a "thinning" of trees than a clearing, leading to a verbal agreement on transparency.



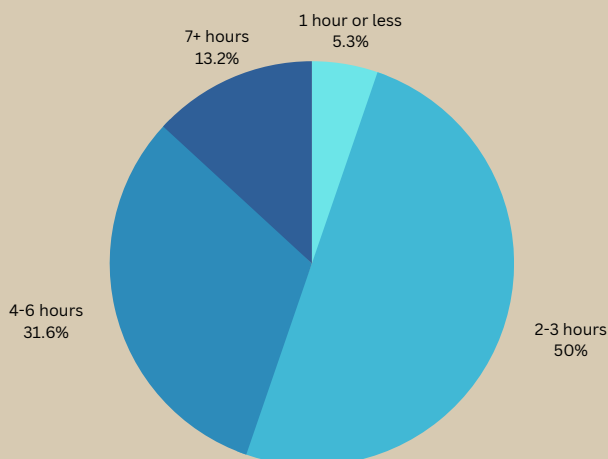
However, the request for a written agreement was declined.

This situation highlights the importance of equestrians being actively engaged in their respective sites, whether under state, federal, or county jurisdiction.

The efforts of the Rock River Trail and Horseman Association and the Franklin Creek Conservation Association have already had a significant impact on the future of one of Region 1's most active equestrian sites. It serves as a reminder for equestrians to remain vigilant and involved in the management of their recreational areas to protect and preserve their interests.

### Straight From The Horse's Mouth

We asked our Facebook followers what is the ideal length (in time) for a trail ride. Here are your answers



***If you have concerns or questions about your favorite trail site, please contact us at [hci@horsemencouncil.org](mailto:hci@horsemencouncil.org) – we can help you find the information and answers you need!***

## LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT GIFT FOR YOUR FAVORITE HORSE PERSON?

### WARNING

UNDER THE EQUINE ACTIVITY LIABILITY ACT, EACH PARTICIPANT WHO ENGAGES IN AN EQUINE ACTIVITY EXPRESSLY ASSUMES THE RISKS OF ENGAGING IN AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR INJURY, LOSS, OR DAMAGE TO PERSON OR PROPERTY RESULTING FROM THE RISK OF EQUINE ACTIVITIES.

Illinois P.W.A. #89-0111



Why not give them the gift of peace of mind?

To protect themselves and their assets, horse owners must post the Illinois Equine Activity Liability Act (EALA) on their property. HCI offers the Illinois EALA sign that meets all parameters set forth in the Act to ensure compliance.

Visit [horsemencouncil.org](http://horsemencouncil.org) to order yours today!

*Share your success story statewide through HCI!*

Send us your announcements, events, projects, accomplishments, and issues you are facing in your part of Illinois. Email the information to [hci@horsemencouncil.org](mailto:hci@horsemencouncil.org), then keep an eye on our Facebook page or on our website to see it posted!

*Reserve your*

**LICENSE PLATE**

HORSEMEN'S COUNCIL OF ILLINOIS  
EDUCATE • MOBILIZE • REPRESENT

SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT  
[BIT.LY/HCILICENSEPLATE](http://BIT.LY/HCILICENSEPLATE) TO CONFIRM YOUR INTEREST IN PURCHASING A LICENSE PLATE SUPPORTING THE ILLINOIS EQUINE INDUSTRY

ADDITIONAL FEES WILL APPLY. COMPLETING THE FORM GIVES HCI PERMISSION TO CONTACT YOU IN THE FUTURE WITH UPDATES ON THE EQUINE LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM.

## ILLINOIS EQUINE RESEARCH & PROMOTIONS BOARD (IEPB)

THE ILLINOIS EQUINE INDUSTRY RESEARCH AND PROMOTION BOARD COLLECTS, MONITORS, AND DISBURSES EQUINE FEED CHECKOFF FUNDS FOR RESEARCH AND PROMOTION OF, AND EDUCATION FOR, THE EQUINE INDUSTRY IN ILLINOIS.

IEPB awards an average of \$60,000 in grants each year to a variety of equine-related organizations - including therapeutic riding programs, county fairgrounds and equine facilities, equestrian trail and camping organizations, equine humane organizations, horse and saddle clubs, 4-H organizations, and land-grant universities (including SIUE and the University of Illinois) for important research - all with the goal of improving the facilities and opportunities for horse owners and enthusiasts throughout the state.

Visit [iepb.org](http://iepb.org) to learn how your equine-related nonprofit can apply for a grant to support your mission.

ILLINOIS EQUINE RESEARCH & PROMOTIONS BOARD



IEPB.ORG

Since 1987, the Illinois Equine Foundation has provided a tax-free way to help the Illinois equine community through tax-deductible giving for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes. Its purpose is to promote equine events, activities, and education through scholarship funds, grants, financial assistance, and research projects. Contributions of any amount can be designated as general or earmarked for specific uses. Gifts may be received as monetary sums, stock, annuities and other assets, bequests from estates, endowments, or other means. For more information, contact the Illinois Equine Foundation through the HCI office at 217-689-4224 or visit the Foundation page on the HCI website at [horsemencouncil.org/foundation](http://horsemencouncil.org/foundation).



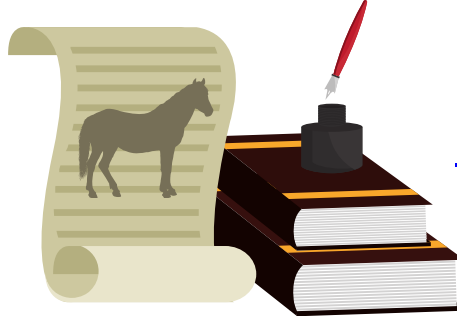


# HCI LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Horsemen's Council of Illinois has a long history of successfully leading efforts to create new Illinois laws and amend existing laws for the benefit of horse owners and the Illinois equine industry.

HCI participates each spring in Illinois Agricultural Legislative Day (IALD), bringing a diverse set of agricultural interest groups to the state capitol to speak directly to state lawmakers in Springfield while providing an opportunity to network with fellow Illinois agricultural industries.

HCI's Legislative Committee monitors proposed bills that may affect horses and our members, starting with when it is proposed all the way through the legislative process. We have fine-tuned legislative proposals, informed and advised horse owners of existing laws that affect them, and defended changes to existing laws that would weaken or remove protections for horse owners.



## PROPOSED LEGISLATION & BILLS IN 2023

HCI's Legislative Committee members are monitoring these bills – you can read the full text by clicking on each bill number.

**HB42:** Establishes fees and a specific fund for proceeds from an HCI decal for the Illinois Universal License Plate. *Status: Effective 1-1-2024. HCI is communicating with the Secretary of State's office on the next steps to move these decals into production and distribution.*

**SB311:** Provides that a group or individual policy of accident and health insurance or managed care plan shall provide coverage for hippotherapy and other forms of therapeutic riding.

*Status: in Rules Committee. HCI supports this bill.*

**HB1169:** Allows a court to appoint a licensed attorney or law student as a special advocate of the interests of justice in the prosecution of a case involving the animal's injury, health, or safety.

*Status: in Rules Committee.  
HCI supports this bill.*

**HB3625:** Establishes a 5-year Equine Therapy Pilot Program to provide grants to PATH Intl-certified organizations providing equine

therapy to foster children who have been abused or neglected and have been diagnosed with a developmental disability or a mental health condition.

*Status: in Rules Committee. HCI supports this bill.*

**HB2053:** Provides that IDOT shall assemble an Automated Driving Systems Review Committee, including a representative of an equestrian advocacy group, to evaluate submitted documentation and make determinations concerning the level of automated driving capabilities and the suitability of the vehicle for operation on public roads. *Status: in Rules Committee. HCI supports this bill and is communicating with the bill sponsors & IDOT to obtain additional information on the Review Committee.*

**VISIT THE HCI WEBSITE FOR CONTINUED UPDATES.**

## **WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?**

- Find out who your elected officials are and how to contact them to establish a relationship BEFORE an issue arises so you can capitalize on it when you need to. Find your elected officials here:  
<https://elections.il.gov/electionoperations/districtlocator/districtofficialsearchbyaddress.aspx>
- Visit or call the district office of your State Senator AND Representative in person and introduce yourself. Explain your work or passion for horses and outline your interests in potential legislation affecting equines.
- A handwritten letter or note to your legislator introducing yourself will also establish the connection if you cannot visit in person.
- After an election, send a personal note of congratulations. Identify yourself as a constituent with horses and offer to be a resource for them on equine issues. Even if you don't consider yourself an expert, you'll likely know more than the legislator, and you can always draw upon HCI for additional information on a particular issue.

***The goal is for your elected officials to think of you as a valuable local expert when faced with a bill that affects horses or the equine industry.***

## **HOW TO HELP HCI WHEN A BILL GETS INTRODUCED**

When a bill has been introduced and is moving through the legislative process, HCI may ask you to contact your elected officials to encourage them to support or oppose a particular bill, especially if you already have an established relationship. Some simple tips to keep in mind when contacting legislators:

- Identify the bill number that's at issue (HB7881).
- Be specific about what action you want your legislator to take (please support HB 7781 *or* Vote NO on HB 7781).
- Identify yourself as a constituent if you are. Be prepared to explain your position if asked. If you don't know an answer to a question, tell them you don't know but you will find out. Then, get that answer and call the legislator back.
- Follow up on the legislation so you know how they voted after your contact and to maintain awareness of how your representatives vote on your issues.
- Communicate with them to let them know you're paying attention to how they vote.
- Fill out a witness slip!!! When bills are in committee, witness slips are often read into the committee minutes. Here's your chance to state your position without having to travel to Springfield. For step-by-step guidance on completing a witness slip, click on "How to Complete a Witness Slip" on this page:  
<https://www.isvma.org/witness-slip/>
- Just be professional, honest, forthright, and helpful. It may seem overwhelming to introduce yourself and initiate this relationship, but it will pay off in many ways in the long run.