

The Horse Industry Supports America's Veterans, Applauds Increased Federal Funds for Equine-Assisted Therapy

Background:

The U.S. horse industry, which supports nearly one million American jobs and contributes \$122 billion to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), urges Congress to continue to increase funds for equine assisted activity therapy (EAAT) to help our nation's warriors when they return from combat. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, Congress increased funds for EAAT by \$1 million within the budget for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA). For FY2019, Congress has allocated \$1.5 million to EAAT within the Adaptive Sports Program. Congress has recognized the effectiveness of EAAT by increasing funds for two consecutive years.

The robust equine therapy provisions trace their roots to pro-horse industry measures championed by Rep. Barr (R-KY), directing Congress to allocate more resources to VA for equine therapy. In addition to providing invaluable services to U.S. veterans, equine-assisted therapy operations support more than 6,700 jobs and generate \$311.7 million in annual revenues, according to a 2017 economic impact study.

Status:

On September 13, Congress approved \$1.5 million for EAAT in the FY2019 VA spending package (H.R. 5895). Because the demand for EAAT for veterans exceeded available federal resources in FY2018, lawmakers increased funding by 50% over the previous year's levels. The horse industry applauds lawmakers for continuing to increase resources for equine therapy to help America's veterans transition to civilian life.

Take Action:

House Message: Tell your House lawmakers that you are pleased that Congress continues to increase federal resources for equine therapy for America's warriors. The House has taken the lead on this important issue for veterans, and convinced colleagues in the Senate to follow suit.

Senate Message: The horse industry congratulates the U.S. Senate for adopting provisions in the FY2019 spending package that recognize the importance of equine therapy for America's warriors. By increasing federal funds for EAAT, the Senate acknowledges that equine therapy gives a leg-up to veterans adjusting to civilian life.