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Dear Rabbi Metzger,

I am a concerned citizen who values religious freedom, but draws the line at animal cruelty. I am shocked to learn that 80% of kosher meat imported into Israel begins on South American kill floors that shackle and hoist cows. Alert animals are chained upside down by a single leg. Muscles and tendons rip apart as the terrified cow dangles for minutes at a time.

Shackle-and-hoist slaughter is so excruciating it is banned in U.S. and European non-kosher kill plants. As you know, in 2002 the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards deemed shackling and hoisting "a violation of Jewish laws forbidding cruelty to animals" and advocated use of upright pens.

The Chief Rabbinate is empowered to choose a small bit of mercy each time it approves kosher meat imported from South America. I respectfully ask you to forbid import from any slaughterhouse that practices shackling and hoisting.

There is no defensible reason, religious or economic, to subject animals killed for food to gratuitous pain and suffering.

Thank you,