

# U.S. House Passes Series of Amendments to Crack Down on Animal Cruelty, Trophy Hunting of Threatened Species

*House approves \$3 Million for Animal Fighting and Other Anti-Cruelty Enforcement, Restricts Elephant and Lion Trophy Imports*

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, June 21, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, the U.S. House passed three [animal](#) protection amendments to H.R. 3055 that seek proper enforcement of our federal animal welfare and conservation laws. Two amendments attracted broad bipartisan support and seek to dedicate funding to the enforcement of our federal anti-cruelty laws to stop animal fighting, animal crushing, and horse [soring](#), and a third also limit imports of sport hunted trophies of elephants and lions from three African countries. H.R. 3055, which includes these and other amendments, continues with the amendment process before final action is taken by the House.



Cecil the lion killed in Zimbabwe by American dentist

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Without enforcement, our laws are nothing but words.”  
*Holly Gann, director of federal affairs at Animal Wellness Action*

The Stevens-King amendment passed in a roll call vote of 381-50, with not a single Democrat opposing the measure. The Neguse-King amendment passed by a voice vote, as part of a set of amendments taken up en bloc. And the Buchanan-Huffman amendment passed in a roll call vote of 239 - 193.

“Congress has made great strides to improve our animal welfare laws and rid this country of heartless cruelty

toward animals, yet there are currently insufficient resources to ensure that these laws are adequately enforced,” said Congresswoman Haley Stevens. “This amendment takes bold action to both defend the rights of animals and protect the safety of our communities. I will urge my colleagues to support this important amendment and will work to include it in the final appropriations bill.”

“I was honored to lead this bipartisan, commonsense amendment to secure funds for USDA investigations of animal fighting,” said Congressman Joe Neguse. Enforcement by USDA’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG), which is responsible for investigating these crimes, has badly lagged. With adequate funding moving forward, the OIG can better identify and intervene in these horrific crimes, and ultimately bring these cruel activities to an end. Addressing these crimes will not only help prevent the suffering of animals, but will also deter the drug trafficking, gang violence, and other violence against people that goes hand-in-hand with animal fighting activities.”

“The House has taken a series of votes to crack down on vicious acts of animal cruelty through enhanced enforcement and also to see that the provisions of the Endangered Species Act are not undercut by allowing elephant and lion trophies to be imported into our country,” said Wayne Pacelle, founder of Animal Wellness Action. “We thank our legislative leaders and our other House supporters and ask that the Senate take similar action on these measures.”

“Without enforcement, our laws are nothing but words,” said Holly Gann, director of federal affairs at Animal Wellness Foundation. “The United States Department of Agriculture must vigorously enforce the animal fighting law, and we encourage the Department of Justice to establish an Animal Cruelty Crimes unit with personnel focused solely on these issues to allow for efficient and effective enforcement.”

Amendment #85 was introduced to guide the Department of Justice to use \$2 million from the Legal Activities account to enforce animal welfare crimes. The amendment is sponsored by Reps. Haley Stevens (D-MI), Matt Gaetz (R-FL), Joe Neguse (D-CO), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Ben McAdams (D-UT), Peter King (R-NY), Madeleine Dean (D-PA), Vern Buchanan (R-FL), and Cindy Axne (D-IA). The amendment instructs the Department of Justice to allocate resources to enforce federal criminal statutes to stop animal cruelty, including the federal animal fighting laws, the Horse Protection Act that was intended to wipe out the scourge of soring – the intentional injuring of Tennessee Walking Horses’ front limbs to produce an artificial high-stepping gait known as the “big lick,” – the Crush Video law, and the Animal Welfare Act. The DOJ and USDA must actively enforce federal laws, and failure to do so puts vulnerable animals and communities in serious danger.

Amendment #116 provides \$1 million dollars for the enforcement of the animal fighting law through the USDA’s Office of Inspector General. The amendment is sponsored by Reps. Joe Neguse (D-CO), Peter King (R-NY), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Roger Marshall (R-KS), Ben McAdams (D-UT), Madeleine Dean (D-PA), Steve Cohen (D-TN), and Ron Estes (R-KS). The Congress has upgraded the federal law against animal fighting (7 U.S.C. § 2156 and 18 U.S.C. § 49) five times in the last two decades, and this amendment signals to USDA that it should aggressively crack down on dogfighting and cockfighting, including in the U.S. territories.

Amendment #133 bars U.S. Interior Department funding for imports of sport-hunted elephant



Cockfighting Ring



Example of soring that enforcement of the Horse Protection Act would prevent

and lion trophies from Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The amendment is sponsored by Reps. Vern Buchanan (R-FL), Jared Huffman (D-CA), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), and Ted Lieu (D-CA).

Each of these three amendments to H.R. 3055, are championed by Animal Wellness Action and the Animal Wellness Foundation, are advocating on Capitol Hill to ensure that animals have a voice in the U.S. Congress.

H.R. 3055 includes five FY 2020 spending bills: Commerce-Justice-Science, Agriculture-Rural Development-FDA, Interior-Environment, Military Construction-Veterans Affairs, and Transportation-Housing and Urban Development.

The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

Animal Wellness Action (Action) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and

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