

U.S. House Passes RAWR Act to Crackdown on Wildlife Trafficking and Terrorist Regimes

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES , July 15, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Rescuing Animals With Rewards (RAWR) Act, H.R. 97 – the first stand-alone [animal](#) protection measures to pass the House in the 116th Congress. The legislation would amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to authorize rewards for thwarting [wildlife](#) trafficking linked to [terrorism](#) and organized crime.

Wildlife trafficking is a major transnational crime that is estimated to generate over \$10 billion a year in illegal profits, and the drivers of the enterprise are often organized, sophisticated criminal enterprises, including known terrorist organizations. Wildlife trafficking not only threatens endangered species worldwide, but also jeopardizes local security, spreads disease, undermines rule of law, fuels corruption, and damages economic development.



Cecil the lion killed in Zimbabwe by American dentist

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Wildlife crimes undermine national security and cause immense cruelty to animals.”

Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action

“Wildlife crimes undermine national security and cause immense cruelty to animals,” said Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action. “We applaud Representatives Vern Buchanan and Dina Titus for offering a creative way to crack down on these international crimes.”

“Wildlife trafficking is a nefarious and persistent threat to endangered animals across the world,” said U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-FL). “The RAWR Act provides another tool to crack down on the billions of dollars generated by this illegal activity.”

“Today Congress took a major step to put the world on notice that international wildlife trafficking will be treated as a serious crime,” said U.S. Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV). “This heinous practice decimates endangered species and generates billions of dollars for transnational criminal networks. Passage of this bill is an important bipartisan victory in the House, and I hope the Senate will move quickly to ensure that elephants, lions, rhinos, and tigers will be protected for generations to come.”

The passage of the RAWR Act comes on the heels of a recent House appropriations amendment championed by Animal Wellness Action and the Animal Wellness Foundation that passed by a vote of 239 to 192 to bar imports of sport-hunted trophies from elephants and lions, both listed as threatened or endangered across their range. Rep. Buchanan led that amendment and Rep. Titus supported it.

Animal Wellness also supports other legislative initiatives to stop the trade in animal parts, including the Shark Fin Trade Elimination Act and the Bear Protection Act, which seeks to stop the killing of bears for their gall bladders.

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.



Ivory from Elephant Tusks is Commonly Trafficked

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 other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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