

# Bipartisan Reps. Michael Guest and Bennie Thompson Stand Strong Together in Supporting Anti Horse Cruelty Legislation

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, USA, August 6, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act, H.R. 693, by a vote of [333 to 96](#). U.S. Reps. Bennie Thompson (D-MS-02) and Michael Guest (R-MS-03) banded together in bipartisan fashion and voted in support of the measure that would end the painful practice of 'soring.' U.S. Reps. Trent Kelly (R-MS-01), and Steven Palazzo (R-MS-04), broke from the majority of Republicans in the U.S. House, and voted against the measure, siding with abusers.

The PAST Act seeks to strengthen the Horse Protection Act and end the torturous, painful practice of soring Tennessee Walking, Racking, and Spotted Saddle Horses. Soring, the intentional infliction of pain to horses' front limbs by applying caustic chemicals such as mustard oil or kerosene or inserting sharp objects into the horses' hooves to create an exaggerated gait known as the "Big Lick," has plagued the equine world for six decades.

In 2015, the University of Mississippi Medical Center refused to accept donations from the Mississippi State Charity Horse Show in Jackson, due to the national controversy surrounding the "Big Lick" animal cruelty that had been exhibited at the event for decades. The controversial event later ceased operations, and disbanded – today, it no longer exists; but the "Big Lick" pain-based torture continues to be exhibited each year at the Tunica Fall Classic that will be held at the Paul Battle, Jr. Arena October 31 – November 2, 2019.



U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson

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*Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action*

“We applaud Reps. Thompson and Guest for taking a stand to pass the PAST Act and end this barbaric and indefensible practice that has marred the horse show world for decades,” said [Marty Irby](#), executive director at Animal Wellness Action and past president of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' & Exhibitors' Association. “The House's overwhelming support of the bill is a powerful signal to the Senate that it should saddle up and end this cruelty to horses once and for all.”

“Once soring ends, and the “big lick” pain-based gait is eradicated, the Tennessee Walking Horse will thrive and grow like never before, and can be proudly exhibited

around the globe,” said Animal Wellness advocate Priscilla Presley. “I want to see the breed flourish and believe Elvis would want to see that as well. The Tennessee Walking Horse, in its sound and natural form is the most versatile, and greatest breed of horse on earth.”

Elvis Presley, a native of Tupelo, had a deep passion for Tennessee Walking Horses that are still found at Graceland to this day, and Priscilla Presley has been a longtime champion and advocate for the PAST Act and protection of the horses.

“The bottom line is you are either for animal cruelty, or you are against it,” said U.S. Rep. Ted Yoho (R-FL-03), lead Republican sponsor of the PAST Act, and co-chair of the Congressional Veterinary Medicine Caucus.

The PAST had been blocked for years by a handful of well-placed lawmakers, but a new House rule now triggers consideration of any measure that attracts 290 or more cosponsors brought the issue to the floor. The PAST Act attracted 308 cosponsors and was led by U.S. Reps. Kurt Schrader (D-OR) and Ted Yoho (R-FL), co-chairs of the Congressional Veterinary Medicine Caucus, along with Reps. Steve Cohen (D-TN), Ron Estes (R-KS), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), and Chris Collins (R-NY).

The PAST Act would ban the use of painful large stacked shoes and ankle chains and would also eliminate the existing system of self-regulation by the industry and toughen penalties for violators of the Horse Protection Act. It's supported by Animal Wellness Action, the American Horse Council, American Veterinary Medical Association, American Association of Equine Practitioners, United States Equestrian Federation, National Sheriff's Association, Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association, and the Citizens' Campaign Against Big Lick Animal Cruelty, a national grassroots leader on the issue based in Oxford.



U.S. Rep. Michael Guest



Priscilla Presley, U.S. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Holly Gann, and Marty Irby on Capitol Hill Discussing the PAST Act

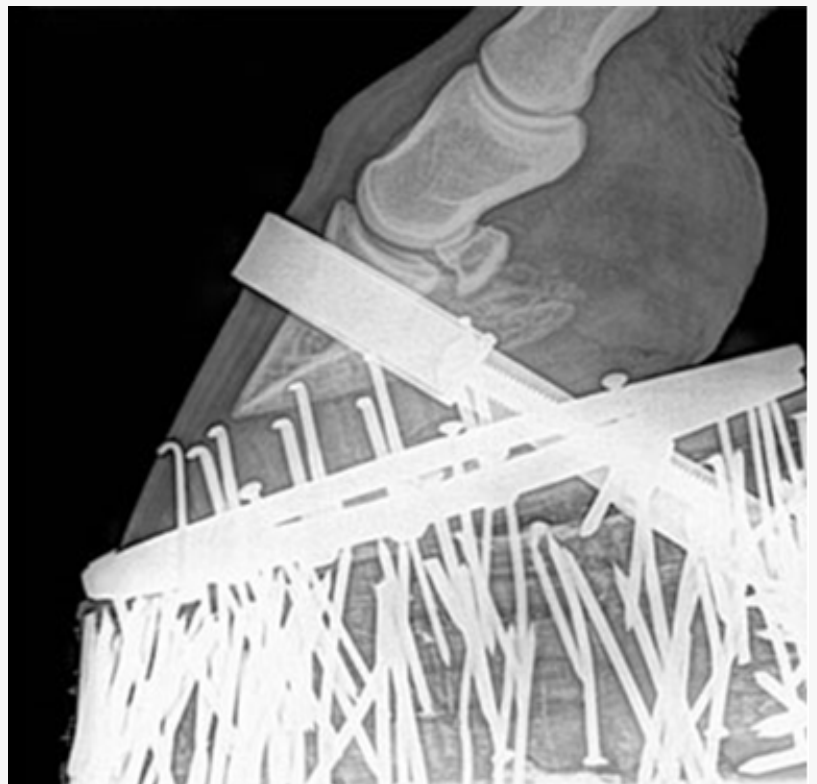
The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable



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 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.

Marty Irby  
ANIMAL WELLNESS ACTION  
2028215686  
[email us here](#)  
Visit us on social media:  
[Facebook](#)  
[Twitter](#)



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