

Sen. Susan Collins' RAWR Act to Crackdown on Wildlife Trafficking & Terrorist Regimes Included in Year End Spending Deal

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, December 19, 2019 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, the U.S. Senate passed a massive \$1.4 trillion year-end spending package with a series of animal protection provisions, several championed by U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME). [The Rescuing Animals With Rewards \(RAWR\) Act, S. 1590](#), led by Collins and U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), was included, and Collins joined a bipartisan group of Senators in championing language to maintain the ban on horse slaughter in the U.S. that was included in the final package as well. The President is expected to sign the measure into law this week.



Ivory from Elephant Tusks is Commonly Trafficked

The RAWR Act would amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to authorize rewards for thwarting wildlife trafficking linked to terrorism and organized crime.

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*Marty Irby, executive director
at Animal Wellness Action*

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.

“Wildlife trafficking is a transnational crime that requires a coordinated and sustained global effort to effectively combat it,” said Senator Susan Collins (R-ME). “Our bipartisan bill is one step closer to becoming law, building

upon efforts to deter this illegal activity by allowing the State Department to offer rewards for information to help stop wildlife traffickers.”

“Wildlife crimes undermine national security and cause immense cruelty to animals,” said [Marty Irby](#), executive director at Animal Wellness Action. “We applaud Senator Collins for championing a creative solution to crack down on these international crimes and are grateful for her tremendous leadership on animal protection issues across the board.”

"The slaughter of wildlife for their parts is one of the greatest threats to rare species across the world," said Penny Eastman, deputy director of federal affairs at Animal Wellness Action. "Sen. Collins has stepped up again with this anti-wildlife trafficking measure to combat the merciless killing of the planet's wildlife."

The RAWR Act had previously passed both the House and Senate, but due to technical differences in the two bills, the measure wasn't signed into law. The differences have been reconciled, and Collins' version of the bill is what was included in the year end package.

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.

Click [here](#) to read Irby's recent opinion piece on [Collins in the Bangor Daily News](#).

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



Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)



Animal Wellness Action Executive Director Marty Irby

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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