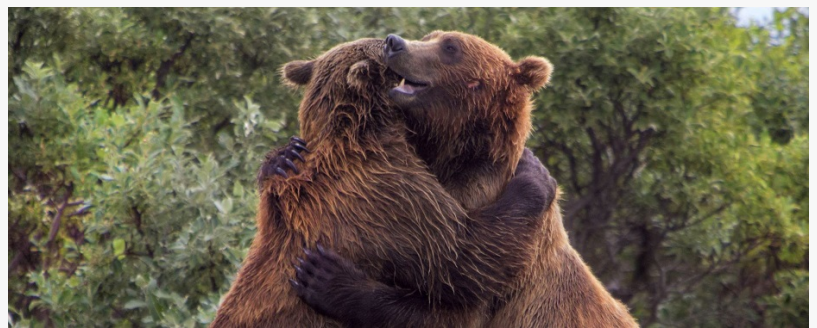


# House Natural Resources Committee Hears Testimony on Bear Protection Act, Captive Primate Safety Act

*Animal Wellness Action Calls on Congress to Move Both Key Wildlife Measures*

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, June 25, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Raul Grijalva and Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee Chairman Jared Huffman, D-Calif. conducted a hearing on measures to combat global trafficking in bear parts and halt the



Bear Protection Act

trade in primates for use as pets. Animal Wellness Action, the Animal Wellness Foundation, and the Center for a Humane Economy endorsed both measures and urged that the full committee and then the House act on the measures and send them to the Senate. Former California Fish

and Game Commission chairman and former federal wildlife agent Mike Sutton testified in support of the bills on behalf of Animal Wellness Action and other groups, saying the “announcement by Chinese government officials that bear bile can be used as a treatment for COVID-19 was an ominous signal that demand for the parts of bears may surge and put enormous pressure on bears in the wild.”

Animal Wellness Action and its partners are lead backers of the Bear Protection Act, with H.R. 2264 introduced in 2019 by U.S. Representatives Ted Lieu, D-Calif.; Rodney Davis, R-Ill., Ann Kuster, D-N.H., and Glenn Thompson, R-Penn., and

S. 3196, led by U.S. Senators John Kennedy, R-La., and Cory Booker, D-N.J.. The bills aim to stop the global trade in bear parts, specifically gallbladders and bile, used mainly in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Some weeks ago, Chinese public health officials included bear bile as an accepted treatment for COVID-19 patients.

“There aren’t enough bears in the world to provide bile to COVID-19 patients, and God help us, if

“

There aren’t enough bears in the world to provide bile to COVID-19 patients, and God help us, if that’s what the patients are depending on when it comes to medical care and treatment.”

*Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action*

that's what the patients are depending on when it comes to medical care and treatment," said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action. "The very few opponents of this bill, under the false pretense of state management authority, are in practical terms running interference for global poaching syndicates. The states and the federal government must both be pro-active to stop global poaching."

In addition to sourcing bear parts from poached bears in the wild, wildlife traffickers also draw these parts from animals confined on bear "farms" in China, South Korea, and Vietnam, where the animals are kept in cages or concrete pits and "milked" for their bile. The Bear Protection Act would forbid selling or buying the internal organs of their fluids. There are eight species of bears in the world, and once gall bladders are extracted from the body of a bear, they are visually indistinguishable in terms of species type.

"Bear bile does not treat symptoms brought about by or cure the COVID-19 disease," said Rep. Rodney Davis, R-IL, and one of the co-authors of the legislation. "China's recent decision to recommend bear bile as a COVID-19 treatment will only lead to increased poaching and threatens the already-unstable bear populations across the world. Using a small part of a bear as a purported treatment to a widespread, global pandemic instead of other known treatments is reckless and puts humans and multiple species of bears at risk."



Wayne Pacelle



U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL)

There are 40 states have laws on the books to address this trade, revealing the emerging consensus to address this problem. The Bear Protection Act is needed to make a global statement about the trade from the United States, and to address gaps or inconsistencies in state laws. A trafficker in Colorado may face up to three years in prison and a \$100,000 fine, while a trafficker in Kentucky may receive only a \$100 fine. Federal sentencing guidelines dictate that the market value of the item must be at least \$350 for a prosecution under the federal Lacey Act, but the courts attribute the value of a gallbladder to only \$280.

The Senate twice passed the Bear Protection Act two decades ago by Unanimous Consent, and U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell was the bill author at the time.

AWA and its partners also strongly endorse the Captive Primate Safety Act, H.R. 1776, introduced by Reps. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., and Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Penn., and S. 2562, by Senators Richard Blumenthal, D.-Conn., and Christopher Murphy, D-Conn. Connecticut had one of the most horrifying incidents of a pet chimpanzee disfiguring a young woman after she came to help calm the animal at the request of the owner.

“Primates don’t belong in backyards or basements, and people who obtain these animals for use as pets put the animals and anyone who interacts with them at risk,” noted Holly Gann, director of federal affairs for Animal Wellness Action and the Animal Wellness Foundation. “Most states ban keeping primates as pets, and Congress should pass a complementary law to end this reckless trade.”

[Click here to watch the replay of the hearing.](#)

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.

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



U.S. Rep. Annie Kuster (D-NH)

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.

WAYNE PACHELLE

ANIMAL WELLNESS ACTION

+1 202-420-0446

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/520292140>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2020 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.