

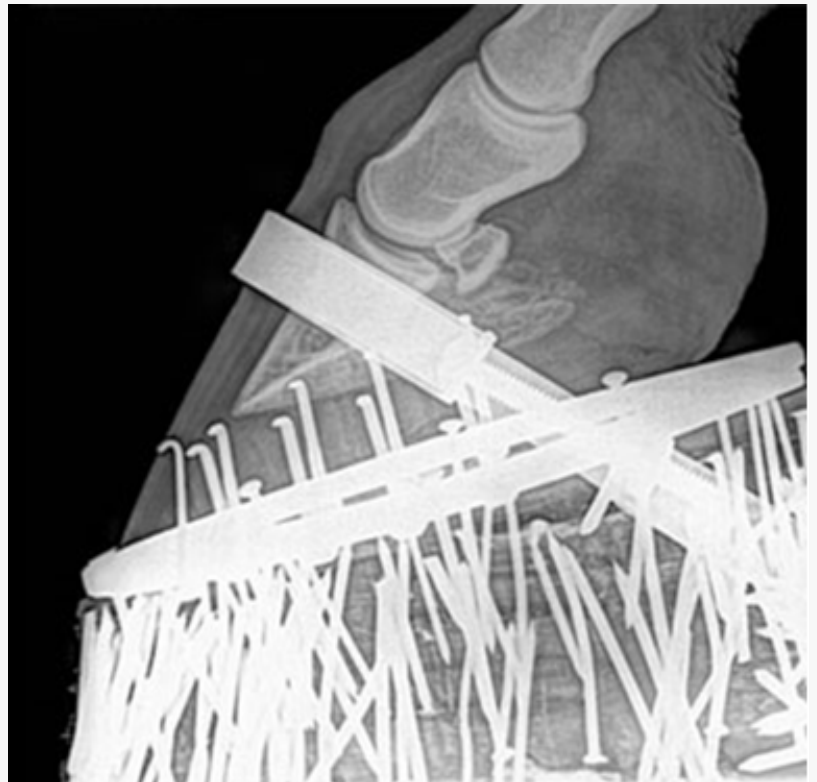
Big Wins for Animals in U.S. House Spending Measures

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, July 31, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The supporters of Animal Wellness Action have truly made a difference for our iconic American wild horses and burros in the past few weeks. Many of you read several of our most recent blogs regarding the BLM's Draconian plan to roundup horses and burros on public lands and turn them into captives, and you took action and told Congress to do something about it. Your efforts, and that piece, sparked ABC News Live to run a national story on the issue, and then we pursued an \$11 million amendment to a major House spending bill that included annual funding for the Department of the Interior and its Bureau of Land Management.

The amendment directs the BLM to use those dollars to implement humane fertility control within the wild horse and burro populations. Using the funding for Porcine Zona Pellucida (PZP) would prevent the money from being utilized for inhumane helicopter roundups, mass holding of horses in government-run facilities, and highly invasive and painful surgical sterilization in the field, often conducted in sweltering heat. Each horse in government holding costs the taxpayer \$1,600 per year, and even the BLM Acting Director William Perry Pendley has said the agency's massive



BLM Wild Horse Helicopter Roundup | Photo: American Wild Horse Campaign



'Big Lick' XRay | Source: USDA

round-up plans would cost \$5 billion. We can save a mountain of cash, during our national emergency, by applying fertility control in the field and keeping horses and burros on the range. A dose of PZP costs \$30, and there is an army of volunteers ready to work with BLM and pitch in.

U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., a “knight in shining armor” for the horses in Congress, stepped up in a big way by leading the effort to fund PZP, and was joined by Republicans and Democrats from all over the U.S., including many western states where the wild horses reside: Reps. Dina Titus, D-Nev., Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., Joe Neguse, D-Colo., Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Penn, David Schweikert, R-Ariz., David Price D-N.C., Peter King, R-N.Y., Deb Haaland, D-N.M., John Katko, R-N.Y., Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., and Ben McAdams, D-Utah. Rep. Titus gave a gripping speech in front of the House Rules Committee. Cohen himself may have said it best regarding the amendment that “will force the Bureau of Land Management to move away from cruel and costly helicopter roundups toward humane management of these national symbols of our wild lands.”

And Cohen didn't stop pushing for horse protections with those in the wild; he also lead another amendment that require \$750,000 be utilized by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Office of Inspector General (OIG) to complete an audit by July 31, 2021 of USDA's Horse Protection Program, enforcement of the Horse Protection Act, and Slaughter Horse Transport Program. The last audit was completed in 2010 and clearly detailed the ineffectiveness of the USDA's Horse Protection Program that has failed to end the practice of soring — the intentional infliction of pain to Tennessee Walking,

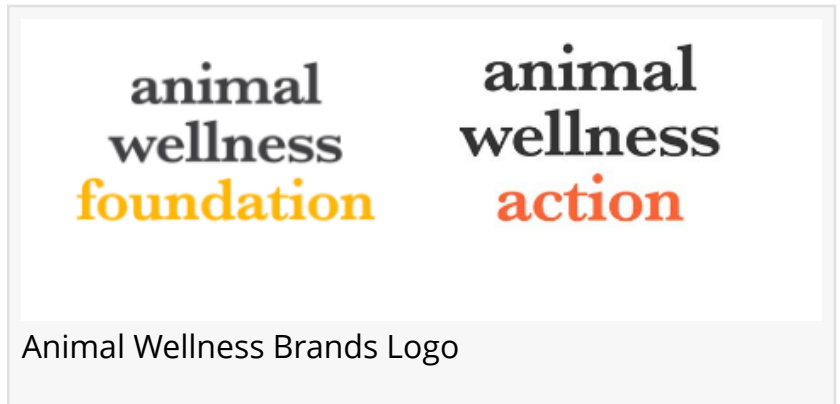


'Big Lick' stacked shoe and chains | Photo: Bradley Dick



Animal Wellness Action Executive Director
Marty Irby

Racking, and Spotted Saddle horses feet and limbs to achieve an artificial high-step known as the “big lick” that’s rewarded at prized events in Tennessee and throughout the Southeastern U.S. That audit should prove to be a valuable tool in our efforts to end the soring and to permanently outlaw horse slaughter in the U.S.



Far too many bureaucrats at USDA have been lax in regulating these inhumane practices. Like the PZP effort, that second amendment passed overwhelmingly by a voice vote and was cosponsored by Reps. Fitzpatrick, R-Penn., Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., Kurt Schrader, D-Oregon, Ron Estes, R-Kan., Steve Chabot, R-Ohio, Peter King, R-N.Y., Tony Cardenas D-Calif., Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., and John Katko, R-N.Y.

Cohen’s colleague, Joe Neguse, also stepped up and led an amendment that provides OIG with \$1,000,000 in funding to enforce animal cruelty laws to crackdown on cockfighting, bestiality, and animal crushing. Reps. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., Madeleine Dean, D-Penn., Posey, Fitzpatrick, Cohen, Estes, Cardenas, King, Ann Kuster, D-N.H., McAdams, and Tim Burchett, R-Tenn co-sponsored that amendment that also passed the House by voice vote.

And in addition to this funding, the base bill we all jumped in to amend doubled USDA’s Horse Protection Program’s budget from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 for 2021, a provision pushed by Rep. Hal Rogers, R-Ky., for a program that had never had more than \$700,000 before last year. It also included language that urges the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture — whomever that may be in 2021 — to implement a 2017 regulation that would eliminate the use of large stacked shoes and ankle chains used in the soring of horses to exacerbate the pain. In a one-two punch back in 2017, President Obama’s Administration had failed to publish the final rule, and President Trump’s team prevented it from moving forward in the new Administration.

U.S. Rep. Andy Barr, R-Ky., championed an amendment to the spending package that easily passed, providing \$5 million to the Veteran’s Affairs Administration for equine assisted therapy to help our American heroes who’ve suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Those who’ve served our country will rest easier with the help of horses who may have otherwise ended up in the slaughter pipeline.

And last night, Neguse stepped up again and ushered to passage an Animal Wellness-backed \$1 million amendment that provides the U.S. Department of Justice funding to help create and Animal Cruelty Crimes Unit that would enforce the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act that President Trump signed into law last November, and other anti-cruelty laws that not been properly exercised. This comes on the heels of Animal Wellness’ recent cockfighting

investigations in Oklahoma, Alabama, and Tennessee that revealed terrible multi-million dollar shipments of gamecocks to Guam, Puerto Rico, and other U.S. Territories. Neguse was joined in this effort by Gaetz, Fitzpatrick, Ben McAdams, Bill Posey, Cohen, Cardenas, Jamie Raskin, D-Md., Katko, Titus, Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C., and Schrader.

These are very important gains in the House, and now we need to replicate them in the Senate. We owe much of this success to you, the supporters of AWA, and we applaud each of you along with Cohen, Neguse, and the Members of Congress who championed and supported these measures. We need you to help out one more time by [taking action here](#) asking your Senators to do their part to protect the animals we all care so deeply about.

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