

Animal Wellness Groups Call on U.S. Senate to Take Action to Protect American Equines

While the U.S. House Has Taken Beneficial Actions to Help Protect Horses, the U.S. Senate Has Been Silent

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– Today, [Animal Wellness Action](#), the [Animal Wellness Foundation](#), Center

for a Humane Economy, American Horse Protection Society, and Horses

for Life Foundation called on the U.S. Senate to take action to protect

American equines as the 116th

Congress comes to a close. Since July

of 2019, the U.S. House has passed seven attempts to protect horses, and every single attempt has either failed to be brought forth for consideration in the U.S. Senate or failed to be included in the FY2021 Senate Appropriations measures.



A terrifying wild horse roundup in action

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It's time for the U.S. Senate to step up and protect the iconic American equines that built our civilization and hauled to Capitol Hill the very bricks from which the U.S. Senate is constructed.”

Marty Irby

“It's time for the U.S. Senate to step up and protect the iconic American equines that built our civilization and hauled to Capitol Hill the very bricks and mortar from which the U.S. Senate Chamber is constructed,” said Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action who was recently honored by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, II, for his work to protect American horses. “The federal government has failed to enact any long-term meaningful equine protection reform since the early 1970s when President Nixon signed the Horse Protection Act and Wild-Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act into law.”

“Legislative efforts to protect American equines have made notable advancements in the 116h Congress. Thanks to the mobilization of the U.S. House, we have several critical measures that

have passed in the lower chamber, including the passage of the PAST Act to end the barbaric torture of horse soring, the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act to end horse doping, and approved FY21 Appropriations funding to mandate that the BLM implement PZP fertility control to humanely manage our nation's wild horses," said Allondra Stevens, founder of Horses For Life Foundation. "It's now incumbent on the U.S. Senate to move these measures forward across the final threshold. It's unacceptable that the Senate has yet to seize the opportunity to take action on these vital reforms that will directly benefit the welfare of horses throughout the USA. The U.S. Senate must act swiftly, without further delay."

"U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby should forge a final year-end spending bill that includes key horse protection provisions," said Hampton Reid, Jr., chairman of the American Horse Protection Society. "My fellow Alabamians and horse protectors will be peppering Shelby's offices in Washington and back home with calls for the inclusion of these key House-passed equine spending reforms."

"The United States Senate is woefully out of step with the American public, who overwhelmingly want our iconic horses – both wild and domestic – protected from cruelty, abuse, and slaughter," said Scott Beckstead, director of campaigns at the Center for a Humane Economy. "Because of the central role horses played in the history of our nation, they deserve to be protected. We call on the Senate leadership to do the right thing and take up consideration of pending legislation to finally give our beloved equines the protection they deserve."

Background:

The U.S. House of Representatives most recently passed the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act, H.R. 1754, led by U.S. Reps. Paul Tonko, D-N.Y., and Andy Barr, R-Ky., that would create a uniform national standard for drug testing and ban race-day doping in U.S. Horseracing. Though U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has introduced a companion measure, that bill faces uncertain prospects in the weeks ahead. The measure is supported by The Jockey Club, The Breeders' Cup, The Jockey's Guild, and all the parent organizations to all three Triple Crown races: The Kentucky Derby, The Preakness Stakes, and The Belmont Stakes.

In July 2019, the House passed the U.S. Senator Joseph D. Tydings Memorial Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act, H.R. 693, by a vote of 333 to 96, with all Democrats and the majority of Republicans voting in support of the measure that would ban large stacked shoes and ankle chains in the showring, create a modernized inspection program, and increase penalties for violators of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) of 1970. But, more than 16 months after passage and tremendous work to achieve a consensus on compromise legislation that would have largely accomplished the objectives of the PAST Act, the Senate hasn't taken even the first step of action. If the Senate does not act on the measure, it will mark 50 years of stasis on the issue.

In 2020, U.S. House Agriculture Appropriators saw fit to increase funding for HPA enforcement from \$1 million to \$2 million thanks to the work of U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers, R-Ky. The funding

measure included language suggesting a failed 2017 Obama-era regulation to end soring should be implemented in 2021, thanks to the work of U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn. In addition, Cohen also championed a House floor amendment to provide \$750,000 for a new USDA Office of Inspector General audit of its Horse Protection Program in 2021, yet not a single one of these initiatives were included in the Senate Agriculture Appropriations FY21 spending bill.

Despite an overwhelming amount of support for a floor amendment to protect wild horses and burros on public lands, the Senate Interior Appropriations bill for FY21 failed to include an \$11 million provision approved by the House that would require the Bureau of Land Management to utilize funding for PZP birth control instead of the mass round-up and incarceration of tens of thousands of our cherished and iconic wild horses and burros. Instead, the Senate Appropriations Committee chose to provide an additional \$14 million for the implementation of a wild horse eradication plan known as the "Path Forward."

In July of 2020, the U.S. House also passed a \$5 million provision championed by U.S. Rep. Andy Barr, R-Ky., co-chair of the Congressional Horse Caucus, that would provide funding for the Veterans Affairs Administration's Adaptive Sports Grant Program to help pair our American heroes with horses that could otherwise be subject to slaughter. Equine-assisted therapy has long been proven to alleviate pain and trauma in veterans that are victims of PTSD. Despite the broad, nonpartisan appeal of this program, Senate appropriators failed to include this measure in the FY21 VA spending bill released in November.

And finally, the FY21 Agriculture Appropriations spending bill the Senate Committee released in November failed to include the annual horse slaughter defund language that has been maintained for most of the past 15 years, a provision that was included in the House-passed FY21 spending measure and in both the House and Senate's FY20 spending bills and final year-end funding measure for 2020. Failure to include the annual defund language that prevents horse slaughter via a de facto ban in defunding USDA inspections of horse plants from opening in the U.S. provides a pathway for the resumption of the slaughter of domesticated and wild equids on U.S. soil.

Animal Wellness 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 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.

The Center for a Humane Economy (“the Center”) is a non-profit organization that focuses on influencing the conduct of corporations to forge a humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both.

Horses For Life Foundation is an advocacy and education group dedicated to ending the slaughter of American horses, protecting wild horses and burros on public lands, and ending equine abuse and neglect through advocacy, public education, and legislative reform.

The American Horse Protection Society is a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit that seeks to represent the interests of equine protection advocates across the U.S. and protect American equines by advocating for state and federal legislative and regulatory horse protection measures and reforms. We advocate for the permanent end of horse slaughter on U.S. soil, the end of soring Tennessee Walking, Alabama Racking, and Spotted Saddle Horses, the end of doping and whipping in U.S. horse racing, and the preservation of our iconic American wild horses and burros.

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