

Animal Wellness Action Executive Director Marty Irby Named one of The Hill's Top Lobbyists for 2020

Today, *The Hill* released its list of honored Top Lobbyists of 2019, including Animal Wellness Action's executive director, Marty Irby, for the second year.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, December 10, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, one of Washington D.C.'s major political daily publications, *The Hill*, released its annual list of honored Top Lobbyists of 2019 and included [Animal Wellness Action's](#) executive director, [Marty Irby](#). Irby was also named as one of *The Hill's* Top Lobbyists for 2019.



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Marty Irby

Irby, a lifelong horseman, and native of Mobile, Ala., was recognized for his work advancing legislation to protect American equines, companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife, and was [honored in August of this year by Her](#)

[Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, II](#) for his work to protect our iconic American horses.

"I'm deeply honored to have been named as one of the top lobbyists in Congress for the second year in a row, and I am truly grateful for the tireless work that our supporters, and my colleagues at AWA have committed to achieve so many victories this year," said Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action. "While COVID-19 has been a serious challenge in 2020, we've doubled down on our work ethic in lobbying Congress and the Trump Administration this year, and we must continue to push for new laws to protect and defend the voiceless animals we all care so deeply about. Proximity to Capitol Hill and persistence are the key ingredients for any successful lobbyist, and I've made sure to remain within a few blocks of the House and Senate each day despite the physical limitations COVID has imposed upon us."

"Marty Irby is a tireless, strategic advocate on Capitol Hill, working easily with Republicans and Democrats to get tangible things accomplished during a time when the media focuses so much on our political divisions," said Wayne Pacelle, president at Animal Wellness Action and a long-time colleague of Irby. "We are proud of Marty for representing not only Alabama so well in Washington, D.C., but the noble cause of defending animals from so many forms of cruelty."

Irby and the rest of Animal Wellness Action's lobbying team worked in 2020 to help secure the following victories for animals:

- Passing the Horseracing Integrity and Safety (HISA) Act, H.R. 1754/S. 4547, in the House, after partnering with The Jockey Club and other leaders in the sport. The measure would ban race-day doping in the sport and create a uniform national standard for drug testing and regulations in the U.S.

- Passing the Big Cat Public Safety Act, H.R. 1380, through the House in a roll call vote that included 48 Republicans despite the Republican leadership's opposition to the bill that would ban the ownership of lions, tigers, leopards, and other big cats. Working with Big

Cat Rescue's Carole and Howard Baskin, co-stars of the Netflix hit series "Tiger King," to garner cosponsors, this legislation is also supported by 36 Senate cosponsors.

- Passing an \$11 million Interior Appropriations Amendment Irby conceived that directed the Bureau of Land Management to utilize more than 10 percent of its wild horse and burro program budget for PZP birth control instead of mass roundups and incarceration of our iconic American wild horses. Working with the American Wild Horse Campaign, the measure, led by U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., garnered the bipartisan support of a dozen cosponsors.

- Passing a \$1 million Agriculture Appropriations Amendment sponsored by Reps. Joe Neguse, D-Colo., Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., and other lawmakers to provide \$1 million to USDA's OIG for enforcement of animal fighting laws. This followed Animal Wellness Action's completion of investigations in Alabama, California, Guam, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Tennessee that shows rampant trafficking of fighting animals in the United States and major exports to U.S. Territories and other nations.

- A \$750,000 Agriculture Appropriations Amendment Irby conceived of, also led by Rep. Cohen to provide funding for the USDA's Office of Inspector General to complete an audit report of the USDA's Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service's Administration of the Horse Protection Program, Enforcement of the Horse Protection Act, and the Slaughter Horse Transport Program no later than July 31st, 2021.



Marty Irby and President Donald Trump at the signing of the PACT Act in November

- A \$1 million Criminal Justice Appropriations Amendment that instructs the Department of Justice to use \$1 million from the Legal Activities account to enforce animal welfare crimes. The measure was sponsored by Reps. Neguse, Gaetz, and numerous other lawmakers. Animal Wellness Action has also worked to introduce a raft of new legislation, expanding the animal welfare agenda at the national level. New bills that the organization has initiated and championed are the Bear Protection Act to stop the trade in bear bile, the Animal Cruelty Enforcement Act to create an Animal Cruelty Crimes section at the Dept. of Justice, the Greyhound Protection Act to ban greyhound racing in the United States, and the Lead Endangers Animals Daily (LEAD) Act to ban the use of lead ammunition on National Wildlife Refuges.

In late December 2019, following The Hill's Top Lobbyists of 2019 awards, Irby and others at Animal Wellness Action worked with Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., and Senators Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon to pass the Rescuing Animals With Rewards (RAWR) Act that was signed into law in the FY 2020 year-end spending bill.

In 2019, Animal Wellness Action also lobbied to pass the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act through the U.S. House and Senate, the first ever anti-cruelty statute in American history, that President Trump signed into law in November of 2019 and commemorated with a signing ceremony where The President recognized Irby. After six years of persistence Irby worked to pass the U.S. Senator Joseph D. Tydings Memorial Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act in the House in 2019, after securing more than 300 House cosponsors and triggering a new rule in the House that prompts floor action on a measure with that level of support, and he continues to lead the charge on Capitol Hill to advance the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act that would reform the Dept. of Agriculture's Commodity Checkoff Programs.

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.

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