

Reps. Quigley and Fitzpatrick Applauded for Reintroduction of Big Cat Public Safety Act Featured in “Tiger King”

Today, Animal Wellness Action applauded Reps. Mike Quigley and Brian Fitzpatrick for reintroducing the Big Cat Public Safety Act.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, January 11, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, [Animal Wellness Action](#) and its affiliates applauded U.S. Representatives Mike Quigley, D-Ill. and Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Penn., for reintroducing the [Big Cat Public Safety Act](#) about one month after the House

passed the measure by a commanding vote of 272 to 114 and putting it on a path toward enactment. Quigley and Fitzpatrick were joined by Reps. Chuy Garcia, D-Ill., Mike Waltz, R-Fla., Jerry McNerney, D-Calif., Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., Earl Blumenauer, D-Oregon, and Steve Womack, R-Ark., as original cosponsors.



A big cat in captivity.

“

Big cats are amazing, but best viewed at a distance in the wild or through a sound barrier at an accredited zoo.”

Wayne Pacelle

The legislation seeks to ban the trade in big cats as pets and to halt exploitation of the animals for cub petting at roadside zoos – two forms of commerce that have been creating a stream of big cats who soon get too big and dangerous to handle and then are discarded by the industry and face subsequent peril. Animal Wellness Action, Big Cat Rescue, the Animal Wellness Foundation, the Center for a Humane Economy, and SPCA International

were among a major set of animal welfare, law enforcement, and conservation groups backing the measure.

“Big cats are amazing, but best viewed at a distance in the wild or through a sound barrier at an accredited zoo,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action. “Breeding them for the pet trade or for cub petting is a hazard for people and the animals, and we give a big roar of

approval to Reps. Mike Quigley and Brian Fitzpatrick for leading the way on getting the bill passed today in the House.”

“Animals like tigers, lions, leopards, and pumas simply do not belong in private ownership. Not only does it place the public, including law enforcement and first responders, in grave danger – it also often results in these animals living in miserable conditions,” said Rep. Mike Quigley, D-III. “After passing the House of Representatives last year with strong bipartisan support, I look forward to the Big Cat Public Safety Act advancing quickly and hopefully being signed into law this year. It’s long past time that we act to protect the public and ensure big cats are treated humanely.”

In many cases, when big cats are discarded by roadside zoos, it is a network of animal sanctuaries that are asked to house the animals for the remainder of their lives, and it is an enormous expense.

Captive big cats are not animals that first responders are trained to handle.

“Firefighters, police officers, and EMTs don’t want to face off against a captive tiger or lion when they respond to an emergency at a private home,” said Jeff Denham, a former four-term Republican House member from the Central Valley of California. “I was the lead author of the Big Cats bill during my time in Congress because I know it’s unsafe to breed these animals for commercial profit – unsafe for the animals and for any people who cross paths with a 350-pound carnivore. I’m delighted the House took up the measure and passed it with bipartisan support.”

A Senate companion bill will soon be introduced. The House and Senate versions are also backed by the National Sheriffs’ Association and the Fraternal Order of Police, along with former attorneys general throughout the nation.

Some years ago, a disturbed animal owner released dozens of large powerful animals into the community in Zanesville, Ohio, and Sheriff Matt Lutz was forced to respond to protect the community.

In 2003, Congress unanimously enacted the Captive Wildlife Safety Act to ban the trade in big cats as pets, and President George W. Bush signed it into law. The measure had a drafting error, and the Big Cat Public Safety Act seeks to correct that problem and to ban breeding big cats for cub petting.

The Zoological Association of America, which had been the primary opponent of the Big Cat Public Safety Act, withdrew its opposition just months ago. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) has long supported the legislation.

Many of the major roadside zoo operators featured in “Tiger King” – including “Joe Exotic” Maldonado-Passage, Tim Stark of Indiana, “Doc” Antle of South Carolina, and Jeff Lowe of

Oklahoma – are either in prison or facing criminal or civil charges from the government because of their alleged mistreatment of animals.

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.

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