

United States House Passes Funding Package with Multitude of Pro-Animal Provisions

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, July 29, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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July 29, 2021 – The Humane Society Legislative Fund commends the U.S. House of Representatives for passing an appropriations package that features numerous animal protection provisions, including directives for better enforcement of laws that target horse soring and other animal cruelty, expanded shelter options for domestic violence survivors with pets, and measures to prevent horse slaughter on U.S. soil, enhance U.S. Department of Agriculture laboratories' compliance with animal welfare standards, and encourage the transition of egg farmers to cage-free operations.

Other animal welfare provisions approved include funding increases to implement a humane, long-term management regime for wild horses and burros on federal land, combat wildlife trafficking, protect endangered and threatened species, and address the dangers of live wildlife markets and zoonotic disease spillover, along with directives to reduce animal testing and to promote federal building designs and materials that reduce bird mortality from collisions.

“These extraordinary gains are a testament to the power of the purse, and the clearest possible indication that animal protection enjoys strong support from the majority of House members,” said Sara Amundson, president of Humane Society Legislative Fund. “We’ll move right into gear to press the Senate to follow suit, because these are all important measures that deserve to be enacted.”

The bill also prohibits funds from being used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to issue permits for the import of a sport-hunted trophy of an elephant or lion taken in Tanzania, Zambia or Zimbabwe – three countries where the species populations are in severe decline. Rep. Ted Lieu, D-Calif., led a letter seeking this prohibition signed by a bipartisan set of 33 representatives. An amendment to strike this important provision was defeated.

Additional amendments approved by a vote of 371 to 55 authorize the transfer of \$2 million to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to study the plight of the West Indian manatee in Florida and potential remedies, championed by Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., and direct the U.S. Department

of Veterans Affairs to use \$5 million for equine assisted therapy within the VA's Adaptive Sports Program, which was advanced by Rep. Andy Barr, R-Ky.

The measures are part of H.R. 4502, "Minibus #1", which passed by a vote of 219 to 208. This package of seven appropriations bills funds several federal departments including Agriculture, Interior, and Health and Human Services, and contains many pro-animal provisions approved by earlier committee action, highlighted here and here.

House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Sanford Bishop, D-Ga., proved a strong champion of animal provisions in his bill, many of which were requested by a bipartisan set of 204 Representatives and 43 Senators led in the House by Reps. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., and Christopher Smith, R-N.J. Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., led a committee amendment to limit higher-speed slaughter lines.

"The way we treat animals reflects the values we hold. I'm thrilled to see so many of our bipartisan animal welfare provisions reflected in the appropriation bills moving forward in Congress," said Rep. Earl Blumenauer, co-chair of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus. "From supporting cage-free egg laying facilities to strengthening the humane handling requirements for poultry plants to stopping horse soring, we are taking critical steps to ensure better treatment of wild and domestic animals."

By a vote of 217 to 212, the House also passed a separate appropriations bill, H.R. 4373, funding the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development, and other agencies that adds tens of millions of dollars and key provisions to tackle the combined threats to human health and animal welfare worldwide from wildlife trafficking and live wildlife markets that are associated with zoonotic disease transmission. During debate on that bill, the House approved a good amendment on combatting the trafficking of endangered species, which was offered by Rep. Jackson Lee, D-Texas.

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Humane Society Legislative Fund works to pass animal protection laws at the state and federal level, to educate the public about animal protection issues and support humane candidates for office. Formed in 2004, HSLF is incorporated under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code as a separate lobbying affiliate of the Humane Society of the United States. Visit us on the web at hslf.org, read our blog at hslf.org/blog and follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/humanelegislation and on Twitter @HSLegFund.

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