

# Statement on Convicted Horse Abuser Jackie McConnell Returning to Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration

*Less Than a Decade After World Championship Show Issues 'Lifetime' Ban, Controversial Horse Sorer Remerges at Event*

SHELBYVILLE, TENNESSEE, USA, September 6, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Following [a report by BillyGoBoy.com](#), that convicted Tennessee Walking Horse abuser [Jackie McConnell](#) attended the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration on Friday night, Animal Wellness Action (AWA) executive director Marty Irby released the following statement:



Far right: Jackie McConnell at the 2021 Celebration | Photo Credit: BillyGoBoy.com

“Allowing Jackie McConnell to return to the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration is a disgrace that has given both the Celebration and Governor Bill Lee, who attended the event on Saturday night, another black eye. The Celebration should uphold its lifetime ban on McConnell and go further to ban the use of large-stacked shoes, ankle chains, and tail braces – that have perpetuated the six-decade-long scourge of soring – at the event.

“

Allowing Jackie McConnell to return to the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration is a disgrace that has given both Celebration and Governor Bill Lee another black eye.”

*Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action*

“As one of the largest USDA certified inspection programs in the breed, the Celebration’s affiliate – the SHOW HIO – has the power to eradicate these gruesome devices from their events and prevent horse abusers like McConnell from attending.”

Background:

Leaders at AWA have worked to enact the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act since 2012 when it

was first introduced in the U.S. House by Reps. Ed Whitfield, R-Ky., and Steve Cohen, D-Tenn. The original measure would ban the use of large, stacked shoes and ankle chains in the showing, eliminate the industry's failed self-policing program, and would increase penalties for those caught soring horses.

The PAST Act only achieved passage through the House in 2019 as result of changing the bill's name to the U.S. Senator Joseph D. Tydings Memorial PAST Act to honor the late Joe Tydings - who authored the HPA in 1970 and passed away in 2018 - a strategy developed by AWA, the Citizens' Campaign Against Big Lick Animal Cruelty, and the Tydings family. The measure - then led by Reps. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore., and Ted Yoho, R-Fla., the two veterinarians in Congress at the time - cleared the U.S. House by a vote of 333 to 96, but with opposition from Senators who hailed from Tennessee and Kentucky and 96 House Republicans opposing the measure, the bill was dead on arrival in the Upper Chamber. In light of that circumstance AWA pulled together representatives still involved in the breed to form revisions to the PAST Act that would help get the measure through the Senate.

And after eighteen grueling months and hundreds of hours on the phone with the industry insiders, coalition partners issued a draft of the compromise bill to the Senators and several equine and animal protection groups that would have insured 2021 to be the last TWHNC with the use of large stacked shoes and ankle chains on the horses' feet. Like the original PAST Act, the revised PAST Act still banned the chains but allowed for a much smaller and removable shoe (about sixty percent less in size than those used today), and it still increased the penalties, eliminated the self-policing scheme, and even



Left to right: Penny Eastman, Meredith Hou, Marty Irby, Clant Seay, Holly Gann, Wayne Pacelle, Gina Garey, and Jennifer Skiff in July of 2019 on Capitol Hill just before passage of the PAST Act | Photo Credit: Animal Wellness Action



1992 Tennessee Walking Horse 2-Year-Old World Grand Champion JFK | Photo Credit: David Pruett

went further than the original PAST Act to ban the use of treacherous devices known as tail braces that hold the horses tail in a U-shaped position after the ligaments in the tail have been severed – all for a certain look. Had it been enacted at the end of 2020, it would be law this November, forbidding a wide range of cruel practices long endemic to the industry. But the effort was [torpedoed by the Humane Society of the U.S. and Humane Society Legislative Fund](#) who continue to fundraise off the demise of the Tennessee Walking Horse breed.

The compromise effort garnered support for the revised PAST Act from Monty Roberts, “the Man Who Listens to Horses;” Mark Miller – the lead singer of the band Sawyer Brown who used to own walking horses; the Citizens’ Campaign Against Big Lick Animal Cruelty; the family of Joe Tydings; SPCA International; NYCLASS; and dozens of equine and animal related groups. The PAST Act, despite strong leadership by Senators Mike Crapo, R-Ida., and Mark Warner, D-Va., has never come up for a vote in the Senate since it was introduced in the Upper Chamber in 2013. Opposition from lawmakers from Kentucky and Tennessee has long stalled the measure in the Senate.

Animal Wellness Action (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

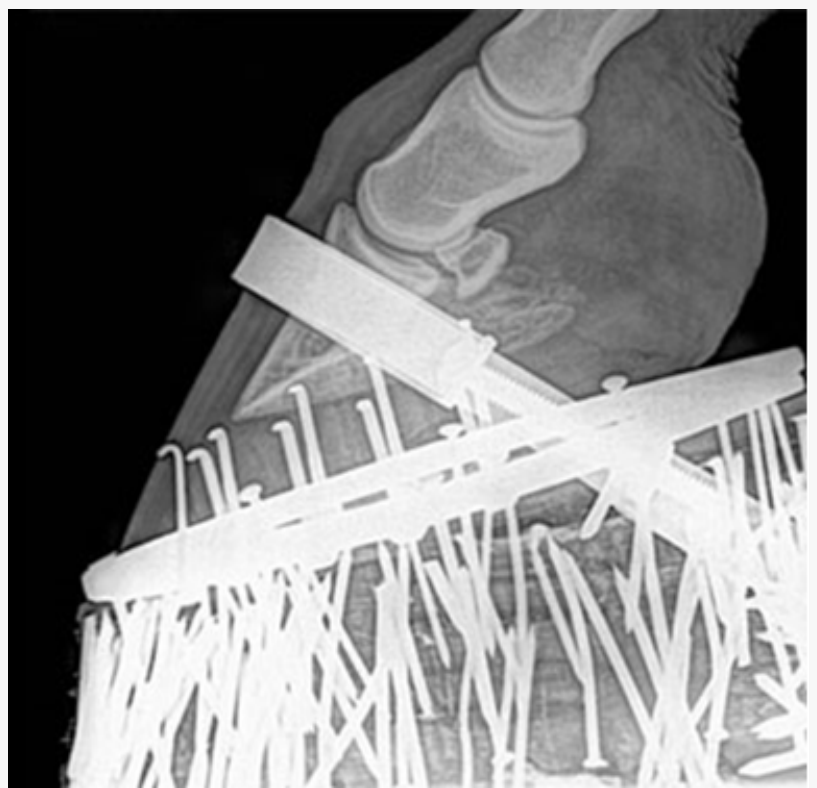


Photo: USDA



Photo: Bradley Dick

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.

Marty Irby

Animal Wellness Action

+1 202-821-5686

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/550634736>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2021 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.