

Congresswoman Nancy Mace: A Tireless Champion for Animal Welfare

Since elected to the U.S. House Mace has become one of the leading Republican voices for the voiceless we care so deeply about

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When the 116th Congress ended, there were only two Republicans standing with a perfect score on animal protection issues – Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa., and Peter King, R-N.Y. And with King's retirement I was a bit concerned that there would be a tremendous void left in the House of Representatives.



Rep. Nancy Mace and Pup on Capitol Hill

But after meeting Rep. Nancy Mace, R-Charleston, just days after her election to Congress, my concerns about that void were alleviated. Nancy expressed her deep inner passion for the voiceless, something we both care so deeply about, and she's stepped up in a big way – a commitment we've not seen from any other Republican freshman in many years.

Nancy Mace is leading on two brand new federal animal protection bills backed by Animal Wellness Action, the Animal Wellness Foundation, and the Center for a Humane Economy. She joined together with one of the most powerful Democrats in Congress – Rep. Rosa DeLauro, chair of the House Committee on Appropriations – in introducing the Mink in Narrowly Kept Spaces are Superspreaders Act ([MINKS Act](#)), that would phase out mink production in the U.S., as the species has been deemed by scientists and doctors as the number one species most susceptible to COVID—19.

A massive worldwide SARS-CoV-2 epidemic in farmed mink parallels the human COVID-19 pandemic with outbreaks on at least 450 farms in 12 countries across Europe and North

America, spawning three new variants that have infected thousands of people. In the U.S. nearly one-third of mink farms have had outbreaks, and mink farms spawned a variant in Michigan.

With gross revenues dropping from \$291 million in 2012 to \$59 million in 2019 (before the virus) — and total annual production at 2.7 million minks — the U.S. mink industry does not bring substantial economic benefits that warrant these risks to human health concerns. Because Americans and Europeans buy so little mink these days, U.S. producers sell their pelts to China, meaning that U.S. communities face the threat of viral transmission to produce a luxury product for a tiny sliver of the Chinese population.

And while working both sides of the aisle, Mace joined Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., and Elaine Luria, D-Va., in introducing the [FDA Modernization Act](#), that would eliminate a Depression-era requirement for animal testing for all new drug development

protocols and allow for alternative methods when validated. The legislation further seeks to spur innovation and open the door to the use of New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) with the goal of improving the science that is the basis for public health protection.

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*Marty Irby, executive director
at Animal Wellness Action*

Rep. Mace, joined by Nevada Democrat, Rep. Dina Titus, also introduced the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act, that would create a system of checks and balances, transparency, and accountability in the USDA's Commodity Checkoff programs that have been ridden with scandal after scandal. These checkoff programs funnel the hard-earned tax dollars of family farmers who adhere to more humane and sustainable animal husbandry practices to slush funds that are used to illegally lobby for policies that harm animals and put farmers out of business while lining the pockets of multi-national corporations and monopolies like JBS, Smithfield, and Cargill.

Nancy Mace has cosponsored every single animal protection bill that stands a chance of passing this Congress: the Big Cat Public Safety Act, that would bar private citizens from keeping dangerous carnivores like lions and tigers in our communities; the Bear Protection Act to combat



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poaching of bears for their gall bladders; the Greyhound Protection Act; the PREPARED Act that would help both animals and pet owners in times of crisis like Hurricane Florence that brought widespread flooding to the Palmetto State in 2018; the Animal Cruelty Enforcement (ACE) Act; the Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act; and legislation to stop the slaughter of American equines for human consumption.

Mace also joined 56 bipartisan Representatives in letter calling for the CDC to lift its ban on canine imports from 113 countries – a new policy that's caused dogs rescued from the dog meat trade in China to die, and left our military heroes and diplomats separated from their pets at the hands of the federal government.

And after meeting Mace's district staff in Charleston last week, it's no surprise that she's accomplished so much in such a very short time. Her staff is second to none, and like Nancy Mace, they've gone above and beyond the call of duty to help animals and help the great people of the First District who wisely elected her to Congress.

Marty Irby is the executive director at Animal Wellness Action in Washington, D.C., and a former 8-time World Champion equestrian who was honored in 2020 by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, II, for his work to protect animals. Follow him on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook @MartyIrby

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