

U.S. Reps. McClain, Fitzpatrick, and Salazar Applauded for Introduction of Veterans for Mustangs Act

Legislation would enable our American heroes with post-traumatic stress better protect wild horses on federal lands

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, April 29, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, U.S. Reps. Lisa McClain, R-MI, Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa., and Maria Salazar, R-Fla. introduced the [Veterans for Mustangs Act](#) (VMA), that would amend the 1971

Wild and Free Roaming Horses and

Burros Act to help better protect American wild horses and burros on federal lands and provide avenues for healing American veterans with post-traumatic stress and other disorders resulting from combat.



Old Man | Photo Credit: Ashley Avis

“

The BLM’s round up of horses with helicopters is horribly inhumane and it breaks my heart to see what these animals go through during these round ups.”

U.S. Rep. Lisa McClain, R-MI

“The BLM’s round up of horses with helicopters is horribly inhumane and it breaks my heart to see what these animals go through during these round ups,” said Rep. Lisa McClain, R-MI. “I’m proud to introduce the Veterans for Mustangs Act, which not only comes up with a humane way to provide medicine to wild horses, but also puts our nation’s veterans on the frontlines of administering these medications.”

“We applaud Reps. McClain, Fitzpatrick, and Salazar for their leadership and dedication to protecting both our American heroes and the iconic American horses upon whose very backs this country was built,” said Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action and eight-time world champion equestrian. “The Veterans for Mustangs Act would help curb the Bureau of Land Management’s radical assault against wild equids on federal lands and save the taxpayer [billions of dollars](#) by administering common-sense immunocontraceptive birth control.”

“We’re elated to see the Veterans for Mustangs Act come to fruition and believe this legislation

will be a game changer in the fight to help wild horses and veterans alike," said Cameron Ring, founder of Veterans for Mustangs and a former National Guard Soldier. "We offer tremendous thanks and applause for Rep. McClain and the Members of Congress leading this effort."

"We are so grateful for the Members of Congress who've stepped in to help better protect the wild horses and burros on the range that I've been deeply connected to and have observed since childhood." said Monty Roberts, the 'Man Who Listens to Horses,' one of the leading horsemen on the planet. "The Veterans for Mustangs Act will enable veterans with post-traumatic stress and other traumas to engage in activities that will produce meaningful results for the betterment of equines and humans alike."

"Involving our honored veterans as an alternative to cruel helicopter roundups to help our wild herds is an idea whose time has come," said Scott Beckstead, director of campaigns at the Center for a Humane Economy. "This bill is a win-win for our horses and burros, our veterans, and the American taxpayers."

The VMA is endorsed by Veterans for Mustangs, Animal Wellness Action, the Animal Wellness Foundation, the Center for a Humane Economy, the Wild Beauty Foundation, the American Horse Protection Society, numerous American Legion Posts across the U.S., Monty Roberts and Flag Is Up Farm, Horse Sense and Healing, War Horse Creek, Devil Dog Depot Equine Sanctuary and Rescue, and Wish for Our Heroes.

Background:

Wild mustangs still roam our western lands and are cherished as a special part of our American Heritage. Despite being an iconic symbol of the American spirit, these majestic wild equids have been mismanaged by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which continues to roundup the wild horse and burro population by helicopter. Under the Biden Administration the U.S. has seen



Left to right: Katherine Heigl, Marty Irby



A billboard truck with short film about the Onaqui wild horses has circled the White House for days with a plea for Biden to cancel the roundup | Photo: Marty Irby

[more roundups](#) and the mass incarceration of more wild horses in a one-year period than under any other Administration prior.

This process causes extensive financial damage, as well as physical and emotional damage to the horses, that creates unnecessary fiscal, health, and welfare burdens. Today, there are more than 50,000 mustangs in holding pens, and that number will likely double in the next few years, at a tremendous cost to the American taxpayer.

The VMA would create a new program to address these concerns, one that offers a more humane method that is also a fiscally responsible solution. The program would save the taxpayer billions of dollars over the next 10 years and offer a unique form of healing for our American heroes – the U.S. veterans who have proudly served our country, and risked their lives – by enabling them to be trained and subsequently administer PZP immunocontraceptive birth control to our iconic American wild horses and burros located on federal lands.

American service members struggle deeply with the transition from war to civilian life. More than half of the 2.6 million veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars struggle with physical and mental health problems stemming from their service. On average, 22 soldiers kill themselves every day, which sadly is a higher death rate than at the height of the Iraq war. To put this in perspective, soldiers statistically are more likely to die at home from their own hand than in war at the hands of the enemy.

Implementing humane fertility control is a way to maintain safe and sustainable population levels on our public lands. The PZP contraceptive vaccine has been recognized by the National Academy of Sciences as the most promising and cost-effective method for managing wild horse



A crowd of more than 100 advocates gathered on the Utah State Capitol Steps with Katherine Heigl on July 2, 2021 | Photo by: Animal Wellness Action



Onaqui mare and foal on public lands set to be rounded up | Photo Credit: Jen Rogers, Wild Horse Photo Safaris

populations. It's a humane solution that can be administered to female horses via a dart injection. A dose is \$30 and takes one treatment per year and becomes self-boosting after 5-7 years. In comparison, warehousing each horse costs around \$1,600 per year.

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 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 (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.

Marty Irby

Animal Wellness Action

+1 202-821-5686

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