

Congressional Hearing on Anti-Horse Slaughter and Soring Legislation Set for Thursday May 26

Chairwoman Jan Schakowsky and Other House Committee Leaders to Focus Attention on Bills to End Horse Slaughter and Injuring Tennessee Walking Horses Competition

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, May 22, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Thursday evening, the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce – which just recently included the FDA Modernization Act as a rider to a larger FDA reform bill to address needless animal testing – [announced it is also](#)

[going to dive into debates](#) about the treatment of horses in the United States. The Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Commerce and Protection, led by lifelong equine protection advocate Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., will hold a hearing on the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act, H.R. 5541, and the Save America's Forgotten Equines (SAFE) Act, H.R. 3355, scheduled for 12:00 PM EST on Thursday, May 26.

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The substance of these measures have both been consistently reintroduced in each Congress since 2012. PAST would amend the Horse Protection Act (HPA) of 1970 help end soring – the intentional infliction of pain to Tennessee Walking Horses' front limbs in order to achieve an artificial high step known as the 'Big Lick' that's prized in small rural parts of Tennessee and Kentucky. SAFE would bring an end to the gruesome trade in horse meat and the

slaughter of American equines shipped to Mexico and Canada – some 23,000 in 2021. Animal Wellness Action (AWA) leaders have long pressed for passage of both bills.

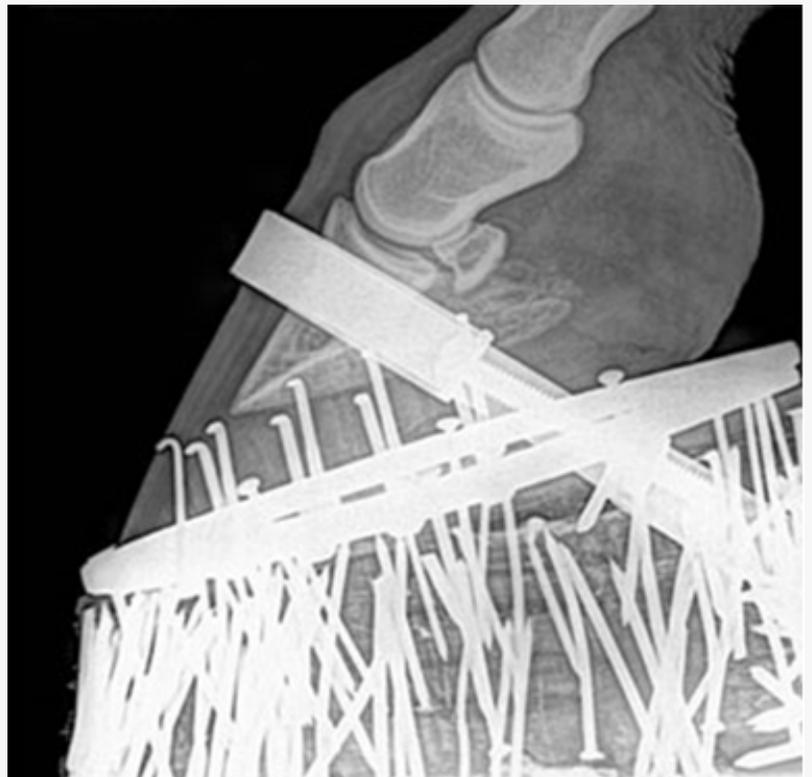
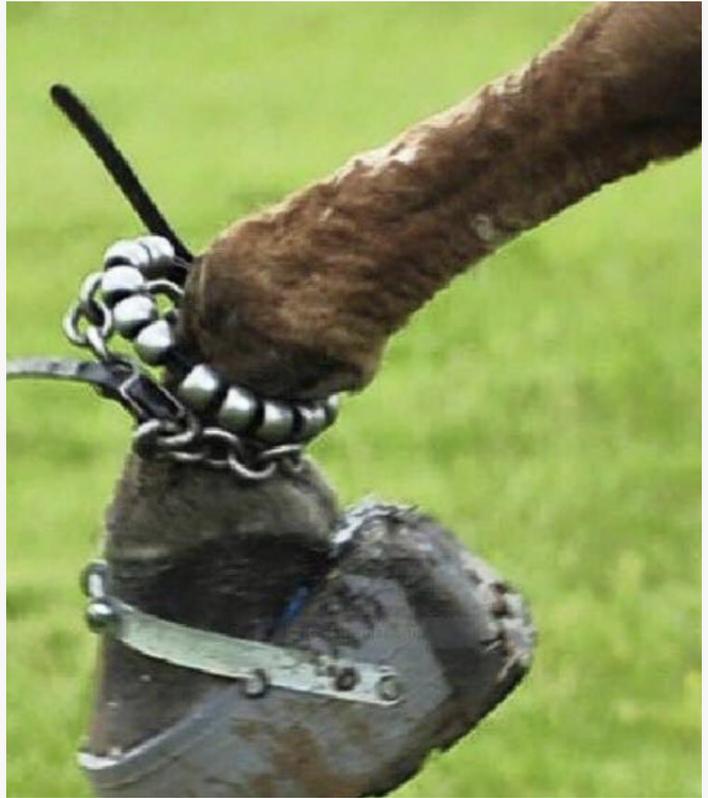


AWA executive director Marty Irby testifying at a House hearing on H.R. 1754 in January 2020

“We applaud Chairwoman Jan Schakowsky for highlighting the PAST Act that would stamp out the terrible practice of soring I’ve witnessed since childhood,” said Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action and a past president of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders’ & Exhibitors’ [Association who testified before Congress in 2013 in support of the measure](#) before Schakowsky’s Subcommittee. “Animal Wellness Action has worked with the current leaders in the Tennessee Walking Horse breed to forge revisions to PAST that would secure swift passage of the measure in the Senate and hope the hearing next week leads to a mark-up that will offer the opportunity to make changes and implement the only viable path that will bring resolution to the issue.”

“The overwhelming majority of Americans oppose the slaughter of equines to be served up as a delicacy in foreign countries,” said Scott Beckstead, director of campaigns for AWA and the Center for a Humane Economy. “It’s long past time that Congress align federal law with our values as a people and pass legislation to bring an end to the predatory horse slaughter industry, because until that happens, American equines, both wild and domesticated, will be at risk of landing in the slaughter pipeline.”

“My grandfather spoke often about compromise,” said Ben Tydings Smith, grandson of the late U.S. Senator Joseph D. Tydings who authored the HPA designed to stamp out soring. “He spoke often about compromise related to the HPA, and how he reached across the aisle to the late U.S. Senator Howard Baker, R-Tenn., to pass the measure and secure the very first law to protect our iconic American equines — whose



very backs this country was built upon. He knew the HPA wasn't perfect, he knew the measure could have done more — but he also recognized that the perfect should never be the enemy of the good, and that supporting progress for horse protection was the right thing to do. The status quo was not acceptable to Joe Tydings.”

Background:

The PAST Act, H.R. 5441/S. 2295, introduced in the 117th Congress by U.S. Sens. Mike Crapo, R-Ida., and Mark Warner, D-Va., and Reps. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa., Schakowsky, and Kurt Schrader, DVM, the only veterinarian in Congress, passed the House by a vote of 333 to 96 in 2019. It was renamed in 2019 the U.S. Senator Joseph D. Tydings Memorial PAST Act at the request of the Tydings family to honor the late Senator who passed away in late 2018. The bill died on arrival in the Senate due to lack of support from key leaders in the Upper Chamber.



PAST would eliminate the use large, stacked shoes, and ankle chains that are placed on horses' feet to exacerbate pain in the showring and produce the Big Lick; revamp the USDA's inspection program, and provide felony level penalties to give teeth to the HPA.

Following PAST's passage in the House in 2019, with the bill dead on arrival in the Senate, AWA leaders worked with the industry for 19 months on revisions to the bill that would bring support from the top organizations in the Tennessee Walking Horse breed, and Senators from Tennessee and Kentucky who have long opposed the measure, but that effort was torpedoed by the Humane Society of the U.S. and Humane Society Legislative Fund. AWA also worked with leaders in the breed to secure more than \$3 million in record breaking funding for enforcement of the Horse Protection Act in 2022. The opportunity to make revisions to PAST still remains with Tennessee Walking Horse leaders who have conceded soring must end.

The SAFE Act, H.R. 3355/S. 2732, introduced in the 117th Congress by U.S. Sens. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Reps. Schakowsky and Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., would permanently ban the transport of horses bound for slaughter. A similar bill to ban horse slaughter saw a hearing in the previous Congress in the Health Subcommittee, but no further action occurred beyond that in either chamber. Irby also testified in support of the SAFE Act and legislation to end doping in American horse racing in a January 2020 hearing before Schakowsky's Subcommittee as well.

As a result, AWA conceived and shepherded to passage an alternative anti-slaughter measure – led by Reps. Troy Carter, D-La., Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa., John Katko, R-N.Y., Schakowsky, Cohen, and Rep. Dina Titus, D-N.V., as well as co-chairs of the Congressional Horse Protection Caucus Andy Barr, R-Ky., and Paul Tonko, D-N.Y., and co-chairs of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus Vern Buchanan, and Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., -- that would have simply banned the transport of equines across state and federal lines for the purposes of slaughter, through the House in June of 2021 by a voice vote with little to no opposition. That measure was endorsed by more than 225 equine related businesses, groups, organizations, and a wide array of stake holders that included The Jockey Club, The Breeders' Cup, Water, Hay Oats Alliance, New York Racing Association, and others. Unfortunately, just like PAST, the measure died in the U.S. Senate where it continues to be an uphill battle to pass horse protection legislation in the 117th Congress.

[Click here to visit Animal Wellness Action's microsite on the PAST Act](#), and here to view Irby and legendary horse trainer Monty Roberts, "The Man Who Listens to Horses," discuss soring and the PAST Act in depth.

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.

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