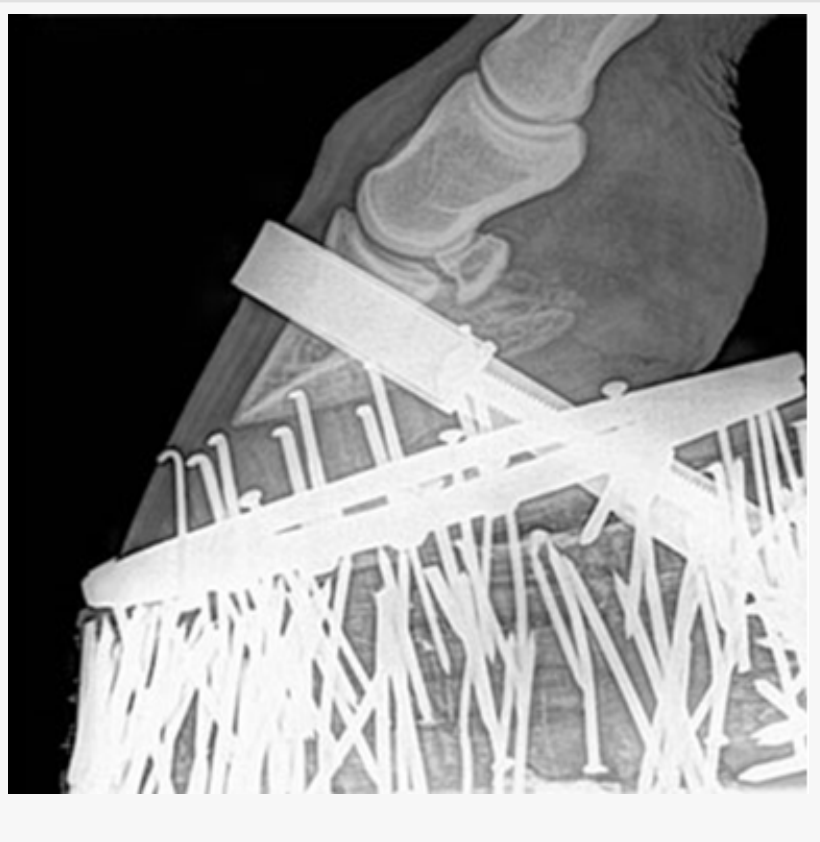


Over 330 Pages of Intel Provided to House Committee Debating Horse Soring as Tennessee Walking Horse Meeting Approaches

House Energy and Commerce Dives into Debate on Soring Following Suggested Changes to the PAST Act in 2020 that Would Ensure Passage in the U.S. Senate

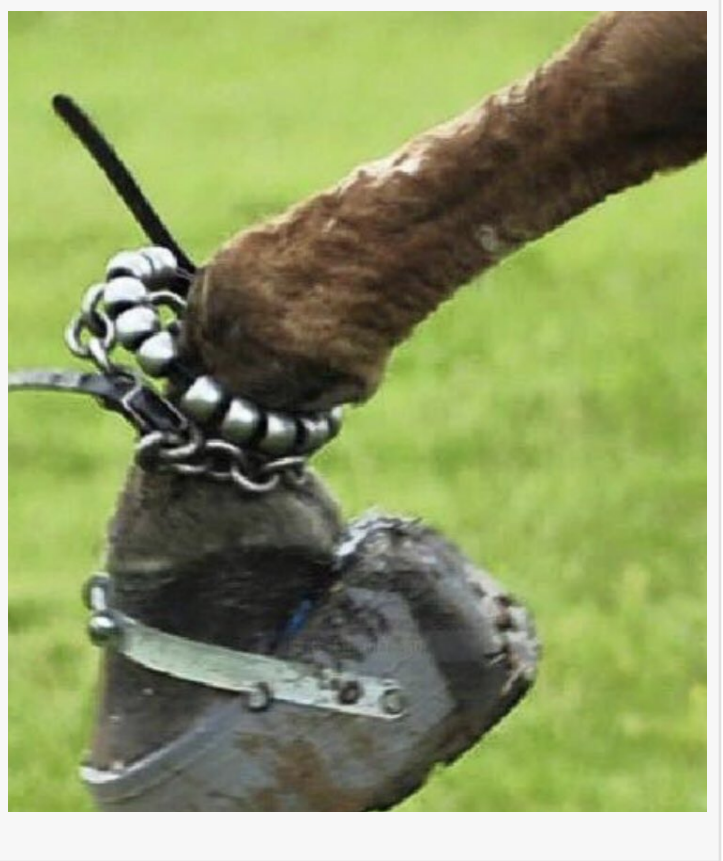
SHELBYVILLE, TN, USA, May 27, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This week, the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce dove into debate about the treatment of horses in the United States. The Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Commerce and Protection, led by lifelong equine protection advocate Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., convened a hearing on the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act, H.R. 5441, on Thursday afternoon.



The PAST Act has been introduced 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 the artificial high step known as the “Big Lick” that’s prized in small rural parts of Tennessee and Kentucky.

Animal Wellness Action (AWA) executive director Marty Irby, who testified in person before the Committee in 2013 on the issue of soring, submitted written testimony [including 332 pages of collateral material that provided a history of work](#) on the PAST Act and the issue of soring over the past decade. The hearing convened on Thursday came just as the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration's Spring Fun Show began in Shelbyville, Tennessee leading up to the semi-annual Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' & Exhibitors' Association's International [Board of](#)

[Directors meeting set to be held Saturday, May 28 at 9:30 AM EST](#), in Lewisburg. [Irby led the charge in May of 2013](#) to secure TWHBEA's endorsement of the PAST Act, but the pro-PAST position was later reversed by TWHBEA's International Board that has long-sought to maintain the use of ankle chains and large, stacked shoes in the show ring. TWHBEA is currently led by president, Jack Heffington, who has incurred numerous soring-related violations of the Horse Protection Act during his time as a competitor.



"There has been no one who has worked harder or in a more creative manner to see the PAST Act or portions of it enacted through law or regulation than I, but every single attempt over the past decade has failed," wrote Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action in Washington, D.C., and a past president of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' & Exhibitors' Association, in his testimony submitted to the committee today. "It's time to think outside of the box."

“

"My grandfather spoke often about compromise...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."

- Ben Tydings Smith, grandson of the late Senator Joe Tydings

"And we also have the opportunity to end the abusive practice of horse soring," said Chairwoman Jan Schakowsky, D-III during the hearing. "This horrifying act involves the intentional injury of horses hooves and legs of performing walking horses.""

"We applaud Chairwoman Jan Schakowsky and Ranking Member Gus Bilirakis for highlighting the terrible practice of soring I have witnessed since childhood and call on the full committee to move the PAST and SAFE Acts swiftly to a markup," Irby added.

Irby was honored in 2020 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth

II for his work to end soring.

"Congress passed the Horse Protection Act more than 50 years ago to end the abuse of soring, but a 2010 audit by USDA's Inspector General found persistent, rampant soring," said Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Memphis, in a news release on Thursday. "In 2017, the USDA Office of Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) moved to finalize a rule to strengthen the agency's Horse

Protection Act regulations by incorporating some of the major tenets of the PAST Act. However, the rule was not implemented."

"My grandfather spoke often about compromise," said Ben Tydings Smith, grandson of the late U.S. Senator Joseph D. Tydings, author of 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

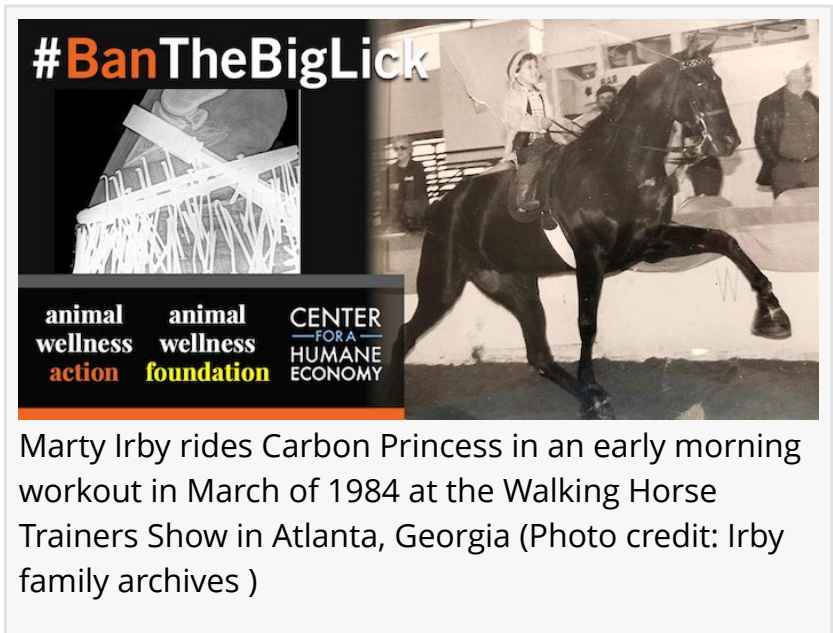


AWA executive director Marty Irby testifying at a House hearing on H.R. 1754 in January 2020



Rep. Steve Cohen discussing horse protection issues with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Priscilla Presley in January of 2019 | Photo Credit: Marty Irby

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 from senators from Tennessee and Kentucky, who have long opposed the measure. That effort was torpedoed by the Humane Society of the United States and the 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.



Marty Irby rides Carbon Princess in an early morning workout in March of 1984 at the Walking Horse Trainers Show in Atlanta, Georgia (Photo credit: Irby family archives)

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/574327241>

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.

© 1995-2022 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.