

Year-End Congressional Spending Bill Includes Highest-Ever Level of Funding for Horse Protection Act

USDA is used funding increases in 2022 to find violators of the Horse Protection Act of 1970, including recent Tunica, Miss., year-end finale

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES ,
December 22, 2022 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Animal Wellness Action applauded the inclusion of more than [\\$4 million in federal funding to enforce the Horse Protection Act](#) (HPA) of 1970 for FY2023 in the year-end spending bill released this week. While \$4.1 million in the USDA enforcement budget is no substitute for a stronger legislative ban on soring, this money will allow more robust enforcement of the existing law that does have important strictures on the barbaric practice of "horse soring." The House passed the Prevent All Soring Tactics Act in September that would help end soring, but as expected, the Senate has failed to act on the measure.



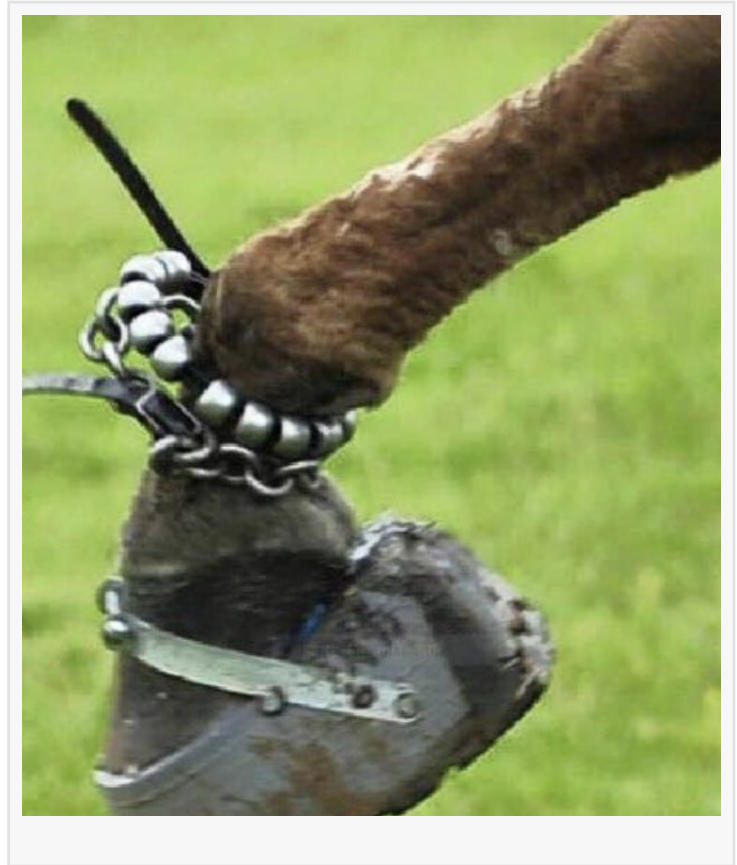
World Grand Champion Tennessee Walking Horse performing the "Big Lick"

Since inception in 2018, Animal Wellness Action has made increasing funding for enforcement of the HPA a top priority. The FY2023 HPA funding is nearly six times the amount appropriated in 2018. Until 2019, federal funding for HPA enforcement had never exceeded \$705,000 for a single fiscal year. Animal Wellness Action, which was formed in 2018, has made HPA funding a top priority in the war to end "soring" – the intentional infliction of pain to horses' front limbs to induce an artificial high-step gait known as the "big lick" that's prized at Tennessee Walking Horse shows in the Southeastern U.S.

The larger equine community and animal protection world have long recognized that a lack of HPA funding for enforcement has contributed to rampant soring at show events, especially in

Tennessee and Kentucky. Animal Wellness Action also helped secure HPA funding in the amount of \$1 million for FY2020, just over \$2 million for FY2021, and \$3.04 million for FY2022 in collaboration with stakeholders in the Tennessee Walking Horse industry.

“We applaud Appropriations Committee leaders, including Rep. Sanford Bishop and Sen. Richard Shelby, for continuing to increase funding for enforcement of the Horse Protection Act to stamp out the painful scourge of soring that’s marred the show horse world for seven decades,” said Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action who also is a past president of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders’ & Exhibitors’ Association. “As the PAST Act that would help end soring continues to flounder in Congress, we remain steadfast in our commitment and lobbying efforts to continue increasing funding for enforcement of the 1970 law authored by my late friend Sen. Joe Tydings.”



“

We applaud Appropriations Committee leaders, including Rep. Sanford Bishop and Sen. Richard Shelby, for continuing to increase funding for enforcement of the Horse Protection Act.”

Marty Irby, Animal Wellness Action executive director

Background:

Last week, [AWA announced the receipt of a letter](#) from USDA Animal Plant and Health Inspection Services (APHIS) Administrator Kevin Shea revealing a third of entrants inspected by USDA were not in compliance with the federal Horse Protection Act at a Tennessee Walking Horse year-end finale held in Tunica, Miss.

The letter came [in response to one sent by Animal Wellness Action executive director Marty Irby](#) to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Administrator Shea on November 1, 2022, requesting the USDA “step up

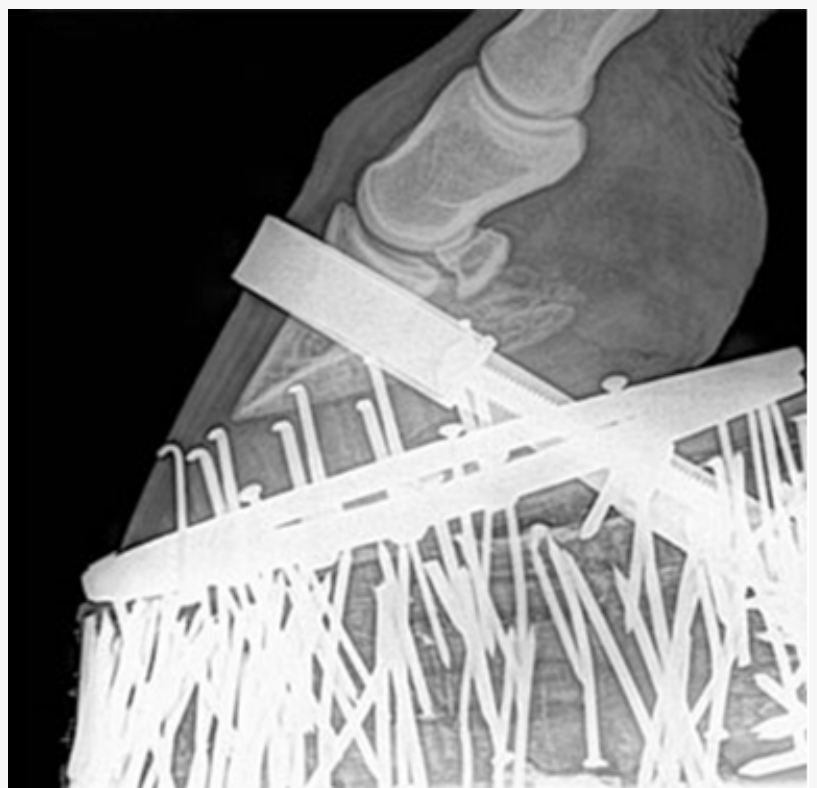
enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) with its presence at the United Walking Horse Fall Finale show located at Paul Battle, Jr. Arena in Tunica, Miss., November 10-12,” utilizing federal funding for which the group successfully lobbied and which was included in the final spending bill for FY2022.

USDA did in fact step up enforcement and attend “two of the three days” of the event according

to the letter from Shea. Shea also stated the USDA inspected 57 entries, and among those 57, "USDA Veterinary Medical Officers identified 20 instances of suspected HPA noncompliance." According to Shea, the horses were disqualified by event management marking an astounding 35% non-compliance rate on USDA inspected horses.

The House has twice passed legislation that would help end soring: the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act, in 2019 and in 2022, but the measure has stalled in the Senate each time. It appears that only a compromise measure can get through both chambers of Congress to provide essential improvements and updates to the Horse Protection Act of 1970, and in the meantime AWA will keep pressing Congress to provide enforcement funding and pressing USDA to utilize those funds to ramp up enforcement.

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.



Animal Wellness Action Executive Director Marty Irby

Marty Irby
Animal Wellness Action
+1 202-821-5686
[email us here](#)
Visit us on social media:
[Facebook](#)
[Twitter](#)

The logo for Animal Wellness Action is displayed in a white box with a thin grey border. The text is arranged in three lines: 'animal' in a large, bold, black serif font; 'wellness' in a large, bold, black serif font; and 'action' in a large, bold, orange sans-serif font.

animal
wellness
action

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/607565758>

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.

© 1995-2023 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.