

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927  
Minority (202) 225-3641

**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Hearing on “H.R. 1518, a bill to amend the Horse Protection Act”**  
**Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade**  
**November 13, 2013**

Today the Subcommittee will consider H.R. 1518, the PAST Act. I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation, and I strongly support its goal of completely eliminating the cruel and inhumane practice of “soring” from horse shows.

As my colleagues have described, soring refers to a variety of techniques that deliberately cause injury to a horse in order to force the horse to place more pressure on its hind legs and pick up its front limbs quickly, creating the kind of exaggerated, unnatural gait that is unfortunately prized by show judges. It is most commonly inflicted upon the Tennessee Walking Horse, a gentle and elegant breed that suffers great pain from these techniques.

In 1970, Congress passed the Horse Protection Act, or HPA, to prohibit the showing, sale, auction, exhibition, or transport of sored horses, and to direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to administer the law and conduct inspections. Six years later, after too few USDA inspections, a bill amending the legislation to permit non-USDA inspections of horses was enacted.

In the time since the 1970s, the inadequacy of HPA has become strikingly clear. H.R. 1518, introduced by my colleague Mr. Whitfield, with Ms. Schakowsky and others as original cosponsors, would address several of the statute’s flaws. First, H.R. 1518 would end the current self-inspecting and self-policing system, which has kept too many soring offenses in the shadows and even allowed repeat offenders to remain on the circuit for years. It would do this by directing the Secretary of Agriculture to pick the inspectors, thereby avoiding the conflicts of interest that arise when those with vested interests select the inspectors. Second, the bill would add to the definition of soring the use of so-called “action devices” on horses’ limbs, such as chains and certain weighted shoes. Third, the bill would increase violation penalties and mandate permanent disqualification from any horse show, exhibition, sale or auction after three cited violations.

As we will hear from the witnesses today, the majority of horse trainers, show organizers, and veterinarians recognize that reforms are needed to ensure that walking horse shows are carried out in a fair and humane manner. The problem in the walking horse industry is too deep

and the self-policing system is too wrought with conflicts of interest to be fixed by self-regulation; action by Congress is essential.

I want to thank Mr. Whitfield for introducing this bill, because it is the right thing to do, for both the well-being of show horses and the restoration of a fair and sound walking horse industry. I encourage all my colleagues who have not already done so to support the bill.

Thank you.