

May 24, 2022

Representative Janice D. Schakowsky
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and
Commerce
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2367 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Gus M. Bilirakis
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and
Commerce
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2354 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Schakowsky and Ranking Member Bilirakis,

On behalf of the American Veterinary Medical Association's 100,000 members, we thank you for holding a hearing to discuss H.R. 5441, the Prevent All Soring Tactics Act or PAST Act. The PAST Act is critical to once and for all end the inhumane practice of soring, which has irreversible negative effects on America's walking horses. Soring is the act of deliberately causing pain through chemical or physical means to exaggerate the leg motion of high-gaited horses, specifically Tennessee Walking Horses, Spotted Saddle Horses, and Racking Horses. Irrespective of the technique, the purpose of soring is to cause the horse pain so that it lifts its legs faster and higher (known as the "big lick") in the show ring. Congress enacted the Horse Protection Act in 1970 with the goal of ending this heinous practice. Unfortunately, despite being illegal for more than 50 years, soring still continues in the show ring today at an alarming rate.

Introduced by Representative Steve Cohen, H.R. 5441 has strong bipartisan support in Congress, with 256 cosponsors in the House and 52 in the Senate. This legislation is desperately needed to end the cruel practice of soring, which can cause irreversible negative effects or even death in America's walking horses. The bill will amend the Horse Protection Act to designate additional unlawful acts, strengthen penalties for violation, and improve the U.S. Department of Agriculture's enforcement capabilities. The bill is supported by more than 100 veterinary, horse industry, and animal protection organizations as well as former walking horse industry leaders who have witnessed the pain and agony these horses must endure.

We thank the committee for taking up this important piece of legislation that aims to end the inhumane practice of soring and protect the welfare of America's walking horses. If you would like additional information on preventing the practice of soring or other animal welfare issues, please contact Dr. Cia Johnson (cjohnson@avma.org) or Whitney Tyler (wtyler@avma.org).

Respectfully,



Janet D. Donlin, DVM, CAE
Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer