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AAEP Opposes H.R. 4098

Bill will not protect Tennessee Walking Horses from abuse

The American Association of Equine Practitioners joins the American Veterinary Medical Association and many others in opposing new legislation introduced on Capitol Hill last week that is being promoted as an alternative to the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act (H.R. 1518/S. 1406).

The AAEP staunchly opposes H.R. 4098, the Horse Protection Amendments Act of 2013, because its implementation will not protect Tennessee Walking Horses, Spotted Saddle horses and Racking horses from the abusive practice of soring. Soring is the intentional infliction of pain in order to create the exaggerated gait known as the "big lick" in the show ring.

Unlike the PAST Act, H.R. 4098 does not make the actual act of soring illegal; it only continues the existing prohibitions on the sale, auction, transport and exhibition of sored horses.

In addition, the new legislation does not prohibit the use of action devices and performance packages, which are often used to intensify the painful effects of soring. Both the AAEP and the AVMA called for a ban on the use of these devices in 2012.

Finally, H.R. 4098 seeks to continue the industry's ineffective self-regulation model instead of giving the U.S. Department of Agriculture the authority it needs to license, train and oversee independent horse show inspectors.

"The AAEP supports the passage of the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act (S. 1406/H.R. 1518) because it will strengthen the Horse Protection Act and significantly increase the effort to end the abuse of the Tennessee Walking Horse," said AAEP President Dr. Jeff Blea. "All veterinarians and horse owners are urged to contact their legislators to voice support for the PAST Act legislation and oppose H.R. 4098."

The PAST Act is supported by the AAEP, AVMA, every state veterinary medical association in the United States, and numerous other groups and individuals, including the American Horse Council. The bill also has overwhelming support in Congress, with more than 267 cosponsors in the House and 50 in the Senate.

For more information on the AAEP and AVMA's efforts to stop this egregious abuse of horses, visit the [AVMA's Soring Resource Page](#).

The American Association of Equine Practitioners, headquartered in Lexington, Ky., was founded in 1954 as a non-profit organization dedicated to the health and welfare of the horse. Currently, the AAEP reaches more than 5 million horse owners through its nearly 10,000 members worldwide and is actively involved in ethics issues, practice management, research and continuing education in the equine veterinary profession and horse industry.