

Senate Committee Approves Bill to Protect Tennessee Walking Horses from Abuse

(April 9, 2014)-Congress moved one step closer to protecting horses from the cruel practice of "soring" when the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation approved the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act (S. 1406/H.R. 1518) today by voice vote. The PAST Act will end the decades-long abusive training method of soring, which involves the use of chemicals and devices on the legs and feet of Tennessee walking horses to force them to perform the high-stepping "Big Lick" gait.

Keith Dane, vice president of equine protection for The Humane Society of the United States, said: "Horse soring is a disgrace, but growing momentum for the PAST Act means that reform is within reach. Today's committee action was a significant step forward. Congress should ensure a sound future for Tennessee walking horses by passing this legislation on the Senate floor without delay."

The HSUS and Humane Society Legislative Fund expressed their thanks to Sens. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., and Mark Warner, D-Va., for their leadership on S. 1406, and to Committee Chairman Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., Ranking Member John Thune, R-S.D., and Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., for their support during today's committee markup.

The PAST Act will fortify the federal Horse Protection Act, which was passed in 1970 but contained loopholes that have allowed soring to thrive in factions of the Tennessee walking horse industry. The bill's needed reforms include eliminating the failed industry self-policing system, banning devices used in the soring process from the show ring, and strengthening penalties to provide a meaningful deterrent against abusing horses to cheat at horse shows.

The PAST Act is co-sponsored<<http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/horse/past-cosponsors-113th.pdf>> by 51 Senators and 269 Representatives. It is endorsed<<http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/horse/past-act-endorsements.pdf>> by the American Horse Council and more than 50 other national and state horse groups, the American Veterinary Medical Association, American Association of Equine Practitioners, and state veterinary groups in all 50 states, key individuals in the Tennessee walking horse show world, and many others.