



*Homes for Horses*  
**COALITION**

September 21, 2022

Congressman Frank Pallone  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2322 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers:

**Re: Support for the PAST Act (H.R. 5441)**

The Homes for Horses Coalition (HHC) is a national network of over 500 equine rescues and sanctuaries in the United States, founded to further the goal of ending horse slaughter and advance equine protection. HHC stands in strong support of a critical horse protection bill being marked up by the full Energy and Commerce Committee: the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act – led by Reps. Steve Cohen (D-TN), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Jan Schakowsky, and Vern Buchanan.

Many of HHC's members are acutely familiar with the abhorrent practices associated with "soring", which involves the deliberate infliction of pain to produce an artificial and grossly exaggerated gait known as "the big lick." The Tennessee walking horse, racking horse, and spotted saddle horse breeds in particular endure extreme pain from the use of action devices including chains, the application of blistering chemicals to a horse's forelegs, the grinding down of the hoof sole and insertion of hard objects into tender areas, pressure shoeing, the use of very tall heavy stacked horseshoes, and more. The goal of these barbaric soring tactics is to cause a horse to attempt – in vain – to avoid the pain by lifting its feet higher and faster.

The landmark Horse Protection of Act of 1970 was intended to stamp out soring, but this abuse has continued unabated. Unfortunately, an industry-run inspection system tantamount to the fox guarding the hen house, coupled with weak deterrents and punishments, has allowed this problem to fester despite the widespread acknowledgement that the status quo fails to adequately protect horses. The country watched in horror when a 2012 ABC News exposé revealed in shocking detail the unthinkable cruelty that horses subjected to soring endure. The PAST Act would implement long overdue reforms in line with recommendations from both the USDA Office of Inspector General and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine to finally combat this scourge.

As the largest national coalition of equine rescues and sanctuaries, we urge Congress to protect our nation's cherished horses from abuse and cruelty by passing legislation to protect horses from the horrific agony caused by soring. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on behalf of the Homes for Horses Coalition and for your leadership in advancing the PAST Act in order to better promote the welfare and safety of America's horses.