



Prevent All Soring Tactics Act of 2015

Introduction

The Horse Protection Act (HPA) was enacted into law in 1971. It has been enforced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for over forty years. USDA deems soring to involve the use of action devices, chemicals, cuts, burns, pads, wedges or practices like trimming a horse's hoof to expose sensitive tissue, so that it causes pain in the horse's forelegs and produces an accentuated show gait for competition or sale.

On April 27, 2015, Senators Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) and Mark Warner (D-VA) re-introduced the Prevent All Soring Tactics Act of 2015 (PAST act) in the Senate and on July 28, 2015, Representatives Ted Yoho (R-FL) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR) re-introduced the PAST Act (HR 3268) in the House of Representatives.. The bill is intended to strengthen the Horse Protection Act (HPA) and prevent the soring of Tennessee Walking Horses, Racking Horses, and Spotted Saddle Horses. The PAST Act was previously introduced Last Congress and is supported by the American Horse Council and most national horse show organizations.

Changes to HPA

The bill would make several major changes to the HPA. It would:

- Prohibit a *Tennessee Walking Horse*, a *Racking Horse*, or a *Spotted Saddle Horse* to be shown, exhibited, or sold at auction with (1) an “action device,” or (2) “a weighted shoe, pad, wedge, hoof band or other device or material” if it is constructed to artificially alter the gait of such a horse and is not strictly protective or therapeutic. These new prohibitions would not apply to other breeds and would not prohibit the use of therapeutic pads, or bell boots or quarter boots that are used as protective devices.
- Increase fees and penalties for violations for soring, including the potential for a lifetime ban for repeat offenders.
- Eliminate the industry's ability to self-police with industry-selected DQPs by creating a new licensing process for inspectors requiring USDA to train, license and appoint independent inspectors for shows, auctions and other HPA-regulated venues that seek to hire an inspector. The current program has received criticism because DQPs are often not independent of the industry they are inspecting. Licensed or accredited veterinarians would be given preference for these positions. The decision to hire an inspector, however, would still be up to the show, sale or auction. It would not be made mandatory.

- Increase the maximum fine for violations from \$3,000 to \$5,000 and the maximum prison sentence from one year to three years.
- Any horse found to be sore could be suspended from competing for 180 days for the first offense, one year for the second, and three years for the third.

Congressional Action

The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

The bill currently has 48 co-sponsors in the Senate and 227 co-sponsors in the House.

AHC Position

The AHC supports this legislation, as does the American Association of Equine Practitioners, U.S. Equestrian Federation, the American Quarter Horse Association, the American Paint Horse Association, the American Morgan Horse Association, the Pinto Horse Association of America, the Arabian Horse Association, the American Saddlebred Horse Association, the United Professional Horsemen's Association, the Appaloosa Horse Club, and the American Veterinarian Medical Association.

