

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 20, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary of Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We continue to be committed to ending the cruel practice of soring of Tennessee Walking, Racking, and Spotted Saddle Horses, and call on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to do everything possible to vigorously enforce the Horse Protection Act (HPA). As the annual Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration (Celebration) in Shelbyville, Tennessee, approaches, we urge USDA field employees to perform their inspection duties with diligence.

We encourage the USDA to ensure a strong and consistent enforcement presence at this year's Celebration, and to utilize the full range of both objective and subjective inspection protocols developed by the Department, including foreign substance swabbing, drug testing, digital palpation, radiography, thermography, the use of hoof testers to identify pain, and pulling of shoes and stacks to detect pressure shoeing. We urge the Department to inspect horses in each class, both pre-show and post-show, each night of the Celebration – not merely monitor the performance of Designated Qualified Persons (DQPs). We also urge the Department's Office of General Counsel to promptly initiate enforcement proceedings under the HPA against violators identified by Veterinary Medical Officers (VMOs). We believe that the small number of enforcement cases prosecuted in recent years, compared to the substantial number of violations documented by VMOs, has encouraged violators to increase the frequency and degree of soring over the past few years.

As the lead sponsors of the Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act, HR 693, we have a great interest in the USDA's work enforcing the HPA at the 2019 Celebration and beyond. The PAST Act has 307 House cosponsors and was approved in July with an overwhelming 333-96 vote, demonstrating the broad bipartisan support for stopping horse soring. The identical companion bill, S. 1007, has already garnered 42 Senate cosponsors since its introduction by Senator Mike Crapo and Senator Mark Warner in April.

We appreciate your attention and look forward to hearing back from you soon regarding this important matter. We will be revisiting the issue and addressing the Department's compliance with our requests following the event.

Sincerely,



KURT SCHRADER, DVM  
Member of Congress



TED S. YOHO, DVM  
Member of Congress



STEVE COHEN  
Member of Congress



JAN SCHAKOWSKY  
Member of Congress



CHRIS COLLINS  
Member of Congress