The PAST Act will end the cruel, inhumane, unethical and illegal practice of soring. Soring deliberately inflicts pain to exaggerate the leg motion of horses to gain an unfair advantage in the show ring. Congress is urged to pass the PAST Act to end soring.

The PAST Act:

- Bans harmful action devices known as chains and stacks on any limb of Tennessee Walking, Spotted Saddle and Racking horses at horse shows, exhibitions and auctions. Action devices are used to hide and worsen the effects of soring. Provides an exemption for pads that are strictly protective or therapeutic;
- Ends the walking horse show industry’s failed self-policing system; and
- Improves the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s ability to oversee inspections and punish violators by placing the training, oversight, licensing and assigning of inspectors into USDA’s hands.
- Makes the act of soring illegal. Currently, it is only illegal to transport, show or auction a horse that has been sored.
- Increases the civil and criminal penalties for violations and allows for the permanent disqualification for violators on their third or higher violation.

Amending the Horse Protection Act

The PAST Act would amend the Horse Protection Act, passed in 1970, to improve the government’s ability to enforce the law and strengthen penalties against those who violate it, hopefully bringing an end to the abusive practice of soring.

Soring is condemned by:
The American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Association of Equine Practitioners, the American Horse Council and numerous horse, animal protection and veterinary groups.

What is the problem?

Soring continues to be used by owners and trainers to win in the show ring. In fact, soring is so common that many trainers and owners believe they must sore to be competitive. Unfortunately, many factors—including insufficient funding and other resources for enforcement, unethical owners and trainers, show judges that reward bad behavior, and strong political influence by the industry—have contributed to a culture of corruption so that now, more than 40 years after passage of the Horse Protection Act, horses continue to be sored.

Soring methods and techniques

The purpose of soring is to cause the horse to lift its legs faster and higher (known as the “big lick”).

- Use of caustic materials (e.g., kerosene, mustard oil) applied to the skin of the lower leg;
- Grounding down the hoof and/or sole to expose sensitive tissues;
- Inserting hard objects between the shoe pads and the sole;
- Over tightening metal hoof bands;
- Improperly shoeing horses.

Rest and training may allow some horses to recover from soring, while others suffer irreversible foot damage, and some become crippled for life. The mental damage done to the horse can make rehabilitation difficult, if not impossible.
Why AVMA supports the PAST Act

• The AVMA and the AAEP have repeatedly called for an end to the use of action devices that hide or mask the symptoms of soring.

• The PAST Act gives the USDA more legal authority to charge and prosecute violators.

• Passage would end the horse show industry’s ability to inspect and regulate itself through its designated qualified persons (DQPs) program.

• The PAST Act establishes a program whereby USDA oversees independent, licensed and trained inspectors.

Status of PAST Act, H.R. 1847:

• Introduced: March 30, 2017
• Bill sponsor: Rep. Ted Yoho, D.V.M. (R-Fla.-3)
• Cosponsors: 266 cosponsors
• Referral: Committee on Energy and Commerce

Resources on Soring:

• View AVMA’s soring resources at: avma.org/soring

• View information about the USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service’s Horse Protection Program at: www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_welfare/hp/index.shtml

PAST Act Supporters

Veterinary and Animal Health
American Veterinary Medical Association
American Association of Equine Practitioners
National Association of Federal Veterinarians
U.S. Animal Health Association
American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation and Homecoming Farm, Inc.
Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association
Veterinarians for Equine Welfare
Alabama Veterinary Medical Association
Alaska Veterinary Medical Association
Arizona Veterinary Medical Association
Arkansas Veterinary Medical Association
California Veterinary Medical Association
Colorado Veterinary Medical Association
Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association
Delaware Veterinary Medical Association
District of Columbia Veterinary Medical Association
Florida Association of Equine Practitioners
Florida Veterinary Medical Association
Georgia Veterinary Medical Association
Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association
Idaho Veterinary Medical Association
Illinois Veterinary Medical Association
Indiana Veterinary Medical Association
Iowa Veterinary Medical Association
Kansas Veterinary Medical Association
Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association
Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association
Maine Veterinary Medical Association
Maryland Veterinary Medical Association
Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association
Michigan Veterinary Medical Association
Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association
Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association
Missouri Veterinary Medical Association
Montana Veterinary Medical Association
Nebraska Veterinary Medical Association
Nevada Veterinary Medical Association
New Hampshire Veterinary Medical Association
New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association
New Mexico Veterinary Medical Association
New York State Veterinary Medical Association
North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association
North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association
Ohio Veterinary Medical Association
Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association
Oregon Veterinary Medical Association
Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association
Puerto Rico Veterinary Medical Association
Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association
South Carolina Association of Veterinarians
South Dakota Veterinary Medical Association
Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association
Texas Veterinary Medical Association
Utah Veterinary Medical Association
Vermont Veterinary Medical Association
Virginia Veterinary Medical Association
Washington State Veterinary Medical Association
West Virginia Veterinary Medical Association
Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association
Wyoming Veterinary Medical Association

Horse Organizations
All American Walking Horse Alliance
American Competitive Trail Horse Association
American Horse Council
American Quarter Horse Association
American Morgan Horse Association
American Paint Horse Association
American Riding Instructors Association
American Saddlebred Horse Association
Appaloosa Horse Club
Arabian Horse Association
Arizona Coalition for Equines
Carolina Walkers, Inc. (South Carolina)
Delaware Equine Council
Equine Voices Rescue & Sanctuary (Arizona)
European Tennessee Walking Horse Association
Fenway Foundation for Friesian Horses
For The Tennessee Walking Horse
Friends of Sound Horses
Friesian Horse Association of North America
Gaitway Walking Horse Association (Missouri)
Highland Equestrian Conservancy (Michigan)
Idaho Horse Council
Illinois Walking Horse Association
International Friesian Show Horse Association
International Walking Horse Association
Maryland Horse Council
Michigan Horse Council
Minnesota Horse Council
Mountain Pleasure Horse Association (Kentucky)
National Plantation Walking Horse Association
National Walking Horse Association
Natural Walking Horses (Europe)
New York State Horse Breeders Association
New York State Horse Council
New York State Plantation Walking Horse Club
Northern California Walking Horse Association
One Horse at a Time, Inc. (Kentucky)
Paso Fino Horse Association
Pennsylvania Equine Council
Pennsylvania Pleasure Walking Horse Association
Pinto Horse Association of America
Plantation Walking Horse Association of California
Plantation Walking Horses of Maryland
Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship
International Professional Horsemen’s Association of America
Pure Pleasure Gaited Horse Association (Oklahoma)
Rate My Horse Pro, Inc.
Rio Verde Roverettes (Arizona)
Rocky Mountain Horse Association (Kentucky)
Sound Trails and Rails Society (Georgia)
South Carolina Horse Council
South Dakota Quarter Horse Association
Southern Comfort Gaited Horse Club (Idaho)
Speak Up for Horses, Inc. (Kentucky)
Tennessee Walking Horse Exhibitors Association of Montana
Tennessee Walking Horse Association of New Jersey, Inc.
Tennessee Walking Horse Association of Oklahoma
Tennessee Walking Horse Exhibitors Association of Oregon
Tennessee Walking Horse Heritage Society
Texas State Horse Council
United Pleasure Walking Horse Association (Missouri)
United Professional Horsemen’s Association
United States Equestrian Federation
Walking Horse Association of Michigan
Wisconsin Horse Council
World Walking Horse Association
Yankee Walkers/Gaited Horses of New England
(Maine/New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island/Connecticut, Vermont)