



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. 693:

- Introduced: January 22, 2019
- Bill sponsor: Rep. Kurt Schrader, D.V.M. (D-OR-05)
- Referral: Committee on Energy and Commerce
- 7/25/2019 Passed 333-96

Status of PAST Act, s. 1007:

- Introduced April 3, 2019
- Bill Sponsor: Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID)
- Referral: Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

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