

Mr. Chairman, today's legislation marks a continuation of the important effort to advance animal welfare in the 110th Congress. One of the stark differences with the new congressional majority is the ability to deal meaningfully with important animal welfare provisions. Congress, as one of its first orders of business, passed the long-stalled animal fighting legislation, ending barbaric cruelty that helped foster and advance other illegal and dangerous activities.

Today Congress has the opportunity to take another step reaffirming policies that deal with the protection of horses and wild burros; protection of free roaming horses and burros from commercial sale and slaughter.

Actually, it's embarrassing that it had to get to this point because, since 1971, the Federal Government has had a policy to protect these animals. Unfortunately, in the last Congress, without hearing or public notice, a rider was slipped into legislation that eliminated these protections. I'm pleased that a majority of the Commerce Committee and a strong bipartisan majority has voted to support this important provision. The Senate is also moving to protect animals by ending the sale of horse meat for human consumption. These are important steps reflecting a renewed commitment to animal welfare, an essential part of any vision of a livable community.

It is important and overdue that Congress renew our commitment to developing a policy framework strongly supported by the American public.