

**Congressional Animal Protection Caucus
Priorities for the 117th Congress**

Legislative Priorities

Big Cat Public Safety Act (H.R. 263) – Reps. Quigley (D-IL) and Fitzpatrick (R-PA)
Prohibits the possession of tigers and other big cats as pets and prohibits direct public contact with big cats in order to end rampant breeding for “cub petting” facilities which contribute to the dangerous overpopulation of privately owned big cats.

Captive Primate Safety Act (H.R. 3135) – Reps. Blumenauer (D-OR) and Fitzpatrick (R-PA)
Prohibits the interstate commerce and possession of primates as pets and limits direct public contact without trained and certified professionals.

Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act (H.R. 2811) – Del. Sablan (D-MP) and Rep. McCaul (R-TX)
Prohibits the commercial trade of shark fins and products containing shark fins, to stem the precipitous decline of shark populations worldwide and to reinforce existing U.S. law against finning (cutting off sharks’ fins, then throwing the animals, usually still alive, back in the water).

Horse Transportation Safety Act (H.R. 921) – Reps. Cohen (D-TN), Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Titus (D-NV)
Promotes public safety and equine welfare by prohibiting the interstate transport of horses in double-deck trailers.

Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act (H.R. 5441) – Reps. Cohen (D-TN), Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Schakowsky (D-IL), and Buchanan (R-FL)
Amends the Horse Protection Act of 1970 to better address the cruel practice of “soring” (in which trainers deliberately inflict pain on the hooves and legs of Tennessee Walking Horses and related breeds to produce an artificially high-stepping gait that wins prizes at some horse shows) by ending the failed system of industry self-policing, banning the use of devices associated with soring, and strengthening penalties.

Save America’s Forgotten Equines (SAFE) Act (H.R. 3355) – Reps. Schakowsky (D-IL) and Buchanan (R-FL)
Prohibits the slaughter of horses for human consumption in the United States as well as prohibit the export of live horses to Mexican and Canadian slaughterhouses to be sold overseas.

Providing Responsible Emergency Plans for Animals at Risk of Emerging Disasters (PREPARED) Act (H.R. 1442) – Reps. Titus (D-NV), Davis (R-IL)
Requires facilities regulated by the Animal Welfare Act to create detailed response plans for animals in their care during disasters and emergencies.

Animal Welfare Enforcement Improvement Act (H.R. 3277)— Rep. Krishnamoorthi (D-IL)
Improves Animal Welfare Act enforcement by strengthening the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s licensing process for animal dealers and exhibitors.

Animal Welfare Act Enforcement

Over the past several years, enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has steadily declined across all categories of enforcement actions. In FY20, APHIS only opened 30 new enforcement cases—a decline of nearly 90% from FY14, when the agency opened 252 new cases. Lower-level actions like official warnings were also issued sparingly; in FY16, the agency issued almost 200 warnings, but in FY20, it issued zero. Unfortunately, the decline in enforcement cannot be explained by a lack of violations in AWA-regulated facilities; APHIS has failed to bring enforcement actions even in instances when inspectors recorded multiple egregious violations of animal welfare. It is a CAPC priority to ensure that APHIS is following the law and protecting animals.

Horse Slaughter

Congress has included language preventing horse slaughter in the agriculture appropriations bill nearly every year since 2005; Reps. Schakowsky (D-IL) and Buchanan (R-FL) lead the yearly bipartisan sign-on letter to this end. However, a loophole allows equines to be exported for slaughter for human consumption to Canada and Mexico. This is why authorizing legislation—the (SAFE) Act—is a CAPC priority, because it will permanently end this practice.

PAWS – Protecting Animals with Shelter

This grant program, based on the former Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act, is funded through USDA to help provide shelter and transitional housing services for survivors of domestic violence and their companion animals. CAPC supports full funding of this program.

Farm Animal Welfare

All animals—including those raised for food—should live free from abuse and suffering. CAPC is supportive of reforms to factory farms, improvements for workers in slaughterhouses, and raising standards for the care of both organic and inorganic farming operations to ensure animal welfare.

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