



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Ed Whitfield
U.S. House of Representatives
2184 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Whitfield:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

Additionally, this year's Celebration management chose designated qualified persons (DQPs) licensed by SHOW, Inc., to perform inspections. USDA does not have the authority to prevent show management from hiring currently licensed DQPs or from appointing certain individuals to serve as judges. However, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has initiated formal administrative complaints to revoke certification of the DQP programs of SHOW, Inc., as well as the Heart of America Walking Horse Association—due to their failure to assess and enforce minimum penalties prescribed by the HPA regulations. These complaints are currently before USDA's Administrative Law Judge for consideration. However, as they have done at horse shows throughout this year, USDA's veterinary medical officers will document any SHOW DQP performance deficiencies, and USDA will take action as appropriate.

Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Dave Loebsack
U.S. House of Representatives
1527 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Loebsack:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Jackie Speier
U.S. House of Representatives
211 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Speier:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Ken Calvert
U.S. House of Representatives
2269 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Calvert:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Sincerely,

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Donna Edwards
U.S. House of Representatives
2445 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Edwards:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Linda T. Sanchez
U.S. House of Representatives
2423 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Sanchez:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Michael M. Honda
U.S. House of Representatives
1713 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Honda:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Timothy H. Bishop
U.S. House of Representatives
306 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bishop:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Julia Brownley
U.S. House of Representatives
1019 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Brownley:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch
U.S. House of Representatives
2133 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Lynch:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Alan S. Lowenthal
U.S. House of Representatives
515 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Lowenthal:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable John F. Tierney
U.S. House of Representatives
2238 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Tierney:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Steve Israel
U.S. House of Representatives
2457 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Israel:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Michael R. Turner
U.S. House of Representatives
2239 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Turner:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Secretary



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August 15, 2014

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
U.S. House of Representatives
2136 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Holmes Norton:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack".

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
U.S. House of Representatives
2330 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Roybal-Allard:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Lou Barletta
U.S. House of Representatives
115 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Barletta:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Alcee L. Hastings
U.S. House of Representatives
2353 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hastings:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema
U.S. House of Representatives
1237 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0309

Dear Congresswoman Sinema:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Sincerely,

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Jerry McNerney
U.S. House of Representatives
1210 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-050

Dear Congressman McNerney:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Richard E. Neal
U.S. House of Representatives
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Neal:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Johnson:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Sincerely,

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
U.S. House of Representatives
2404 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman DeLauro:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Derek C. Kilmer
U.S. House of Representatives
1429 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kilmer:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Sincerely,

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Eliot L. Engel
U.S. House of Representatives
2161 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Engel:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Joe Garcia
U.S. House of Representatives
1440 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Garcia:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo
U.S. House of Representatives
2441 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Bordallo:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Adam Schiff
U.S. House of Representatives
2411 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Schiff:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly
U.S. House of Representatives
424 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Mark Takano
U.S. House of Representatives
1507 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Takano:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

Additionally, this year's Celebration management chose designated qualified persons (DQPs) licensed by SHOW, Inc., to perform inspections. USDA does not have the authority to prevent show management from hiring currently licensed DQPs or from appointing certain individuals to serve as judges. However, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has initiated formal administrative complaints to revoke certification of the DQP programs of SHOW, Inc., as well as the Heart of America Walking Horse Association—due to their failure to assess and enforce minimum penalties prescribed by the HPA regulations. These complaints are currently before USDA's Administrative Law Judge for consideration. However, as they have done at horse shows throughout this year, USDA's veterinary medical officers will document any SHOW DQP performance deficiencies, and USDA will take action as appropriate.

Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable James P. Moran
U.S. House of Representatives
2252 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Moran:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack".

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Carol Shea-Porter
U.S. House of Representatives
1530 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Shea-Porter:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Suzan DelBene
U.S. House of Representatives
318 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman DelBene:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack", is positioned above the printed name and title of the Secretary.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Jared Polis
U.S. House of Representatives
1433 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Polis:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Juan Vargas
U.S. House of Representatives
1605 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Vargas:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack", is positioned above the printed name and title of the Secretary.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Lois Frankel
U.S. House of Representatives
1037 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Frankel:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack", is positioned above the printed name and title of the Secretary.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Alan Grayson
U.S. House of Representatives
430 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Grayson:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack", is positioned above the printed name and title of the Secretary.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Theodore Deutch
U.S. House of Representatives
1024 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Deutch:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack".

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
U.S. House of Representatives
1111 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Blumenauer:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable John Delaney
U.S. House of Representatives
1632 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Delaney:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Joyce Beatty
U.S. House of Representatives
417 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Beatty:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack", is positioned above the printed name and title of the Secretary.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable David Cicilline
U.S. House of Representatives
128 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cicilline:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack", is positioned above the printed name and title of the Secretary.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Denny Heck
U.S. House of Representatives
425 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Heck:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Frederica S. Wilson
U.S. House of Representatives
208 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Wilson:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Michael Grimm
U.S. House of Representatives
512 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Grimm:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack".

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Mike Kelly
U.S. House of Representatives
1519 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kelly:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Richard L. Hanna
U.S. House of Representatives
319 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hanna:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Patrick Meehan
U.S. House of Representatives
204 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Meehan:


Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Dave Joyce
U.S. House of Representatives
1535 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Joyce:

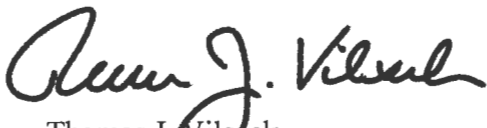
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Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Mark Pocan
U.S. House of Representatives
313 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Pocan:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Sincerely,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Vern Buchanan
U.S. House of Representatives
2104 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Buchanan:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable David Jolly
U.S. House of Representatives
2407 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Jolly:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Gloria Negrete McLeod
U.S. House of Representatives
1641 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Negrete McLeod:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
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United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Michael Fitzpatrick
U.S. House of Representatives
2400 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Fitzpatrick:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
U.S. House of Representatives
1511 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Grijalva:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Walter B. Jones
U.S. House of Representatives
2333 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Jones:

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United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Renee Ellmers
U.S. House of Representative
426 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Ellmers:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Janice D. Schakowsky
U.S. House of Representatives
2367 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Schakowsky:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

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United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

August 15, 2014

The Honorable Steve Cohen
U.S. House of Representatives
2404 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cohen:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2014, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) enforcement of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) at the upcoming Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, August 20-30, 2014.

I appreciate your strong support for USDA's HPA enforcement efforts. USDA will exercise its Federal authority to the maximum extent possible to strictly enforce the HPA at this year's Celebration, using every advanced procedure and tool available to ensure that only sound horses compete. The procedures and tools that will be used include thermography, pastern swabs, digital imaging, shoe removal, and other techniques and technologies. At the 2012 Celebration, USDA and designated qualified persons (DQPs) inspected 1,849 horses and found 166 violations—a 9 percent violation rate. At the 2013 Celebration, 1,952 horses were inspected, and 110 violations found—an approximate 6 percent violation rate. I remain firmly committed to ending the practice of soring and to seeing that USDA takes HPA enforcement actions as appropriate.

Additionally, this year's Celebration management chose designated qualified persons (DQPs) licensed by SHOW, Inc., to perform inspections. USDA does not have the authority to prevent show management from hiring currently licensed DQPs or from appointing certain individuals to serve as judges. However, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has initiated formal administrative complaints to revoke certification of the DQP programs of SHOW, Inc., as well as the Heart of America Walking Horse Association—due to their failure to assess and enforce minimum penalties prescribed by the HPA regulations. These complaints are currently before USDA's Administrative Law Judge for consideration. However, as they have done at horse shows throughout this year, USDA's veterinary medical officers will document any SHOW DQP performance deficiencies, and USDA will take action as appropriate.

Again, thank you for writing and for your support. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Todd Batta, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom J. Vilsack".

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary