



Performance
Show Horse
Association

June 7, 2019

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden:

My name is Terry Dotson and I am the Chairman of the Performance Show Horse Association located in Shelbyville, Tennessee. I am writing today to request your utmost consideration of some issues concerning the Tennessee Walking Horse industry, the 20,000 jobs associated with our industry and the possible Congressional action on H. 693 (the PAST Act).

The Tennessee Walking Horse industry is primarily concentrated in 5 or 6 states with the vast majority of horses and shows located in Tennessee and Kentucky. Our industry supports over 20,000 jobs across rural areas of the country and we provide approximately \$2 billion in economic impact in those areas. Our industry has been vilified by animal rights activists and other organizations who have provided the Congress with false information and a very inaccurate portrayal of the thousands of family's dependent upon this industry for their livelihood and the hundreds of communities and charities that benefit from our shows.

Contrary to the information you have received, the Tennessee Walking Horse is the most inspected horse in the world. The Horse Protection Act requires that shows utilize inspectors provided by Horse Industry Organizations and these inspectors are trained and certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As such, every horse and every horse show is inspected by the Horse Industry Organization inspectors (Designated Qualified Persons), the U.S. Department of Agriculture or both. Additionally, I think it is important to understand that the inspection methods utilized today are completely subjective and yet our horses maintain a 92-95% compliance rate with the requirements of the Horse Protection Act. Our opponent's contentions that "every horse is sore" is simply not true. Additionally, the



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supporters of the PAST Act have told Members of Congress that their bill is “supported by industry”. That is simply a lie. Our organization and organizations such as the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders and Exhibitors Association, the Tennessee Walking Horse Trainers Association, the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, the Tennessee Walking Horse Owners’ Association and the SHOW Horse Industry Organization are the industry. These organizations are made up of the very participants, owners, trainers and show managers that make up the walking horse industry and I can assure you that our industry does not and will not support the PAST Act. It was authored by animal rights activists and its goal is to “protect” horses by simply eliminating the industry that showcases these amazing athletes.

I would also ask you to consider some of the “fairness” issues associated with the PAST Act. There are many breeds of horses that utilize pad and action devices and other equipment as part of their performance and yet the Tennessee Walking Horse is being singled out for elimination even though our horse is, as noted, the most inspected horse in the world and one that maintains a high level of compliance with the Horse Protection Act. Additionally, our horses and our shows have not been in the news lately and, after 20 years as an owner and show participant, I can state that I have never seen a Tennessee Walking Horse die or be injured as a result of performing. In fact, our shows have a “Classic” class where horses that are 15 years old or older can continue performing and showcasing their skills. But, again, the PAST Act singles out our horse for elimination.

Finally, while I do not question the intentions of PAST Act co-sponsors insofar as their desire to help protect animals, as that is our organization’s goal as well, I would question why the co-sponsors would support legislation that effectively eliminates our industry and the livelihoods of these thousands of people simply because that support comes at no cost to them or their constituents. Of the PAST Act co-sponsors, only 6% come from states or areas directly affected by this legislation. That means that 94% of the PAST Act co-sponsors have no interest in and their constituents and economies are not affected in any way and that seems to be a significant issue to me when Members of Congress enact policies or support legislation simply because it does not have any cost to them politically or economically.

That is why I urge you to understand the implications of this legislation and understand what it will do economically to thousands of families and horse owners across Tennessee and Kentucky and a few other states. Please understand that our industry wishes to do all we can to eliminate anyone who cheats and harms these horses and that is why our organization has worked with Cong. Scott Desjarlais and most of the Members of Congress from Tennessee and Kentucky to develop real solutions and we support their legislation, H.R. 1157, that actually provides protections for horses by calling for new inspection methods developed in conjunction with both the Department of Agriculture and experienced equine veterinarians.

I sincerely hope you will take this information into consideration as the supporters of the PAST Act seek to circumvent or bypass the normal Committee process and that this contentious issue, one with significant and profound impacts on the livelihoods of thousands of families in Tennessee and Kentucky. Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this request and this information and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need anything additional on this matter.



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Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read "Terry L. Dotson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the page.

Terry L. Dotson
Chairman
Performance Show Horse Association