

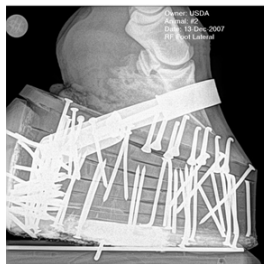
September 27, 2016

SORING TACTICS: OVER 50 YEARS OF ABUSE

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There are currently two separate bills that have been proposed to Congress to address the issue of "soring" on Tennessee Walking Horses. The first proposed bill is aptly named Prevent All Soring Techniques (PAST) Act and it would be an amendment to the currently existing Horse Protection Act.^[i] (file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_edn1) The second proposed bill is the more subtly named Horse Protection Amendments Act (HPAA) of 2015.^[ii] (file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_edn2) On the surface it would appear that both amendments would effectuate the same end goal, but I will discuss in the following paragraphs how the two bills differ in implementation.

Initially, one must understand what "soring" refers to. The practice of soring involves using either chemical or mechanical devices and applying them to the limbs of a horse with the result being irritation, physical pain or distress, inflammation, or lameness.^[iii] (file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_edn3) Soring is employed on horses, primarily Tennessee Walking Horses, "to create an exaggerated, high-stepping gait known as the 'Big Lick.'"^[iv] (file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_edn4) Additionally, soring has been employed for (at least) the past fifty years as a way to gain a quick and easy competitive edge in the show ring.^[v] (file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_edn5)



Although soring is already illegal under the current provisions of the Horse Protection Act, the practice is still widely employed, as evidenced by the two competing bills currently circulating in Congress.^[vi] (file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_edn6) The HPAA has six goals, which sound great up front, and which are: (1) to create consistent oversight, (2) to require term limits for board members, (3) to protect against conflicts of interest, (4) to require input from veterinarians, (5) to require objective testing, and (6) to add suspensions from horse shows.^[vii] (file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_edn7) However, many interested parties, like the American Horse Council (AHC), believe that the HPAA does not provide enough reform considering the current state of affairs. The AHC specifically notes, correctly, that the HPAA does not address the use of mechanical devices such as weighted shoes, pads, and wedges, and it only focuses on the chemical dressings used in soring.^[viii] (file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_edn8) The other major concern is that the HPAA does not increase fines and penalties, which are currently thought to be too lax for violators of the Horse Protection Act, thus creating repeat offenders.^[ix] (file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_edn9)

The PAST Act addresses the shortcomings of the HPAA. Specifically, its goals are to "end the failed system of industry self-policing, ban the use of certain devices associated with soring, strengthen penalties and hold accountable all those involved in this cruel practice. Most significantly, the bill aims to abolish the corrupt self-policing practices currently allowed."^[x] (file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_edn10) Even more exciting, the PAST Act currently has the support of 290 Congressmen compared to HPAA's eleven supporters.^[xi] (file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_edn11) Although it seems that both bills are stalled in Congress at the moment, it is encouraging to see that the most humane bill currently has overwhelming support compared to the less humane bill. If, or when, an amendment to the Horse Protection Act is passed, it is likely that use of all soring techniques will be prevented, and it likely will also result in more adherence to the mandates of the act.

[i]
(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_ednref 1) *What is the Horse Protection Act?*, Humane Soc'y of the U.S.
http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/tenn_walking_horses/facts/horse_protection_act.html (last visited Sep. 13, 2016),.

[ii]
(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_ednref 2) *Horse Protection Amendments Act*, Am. Veterinary Med. Ass'n,
<https://www.avma.org/Advocacy/National/Congress/Pages/Horse-Protection-Amendments-Act.aspx> (last visited Sep. 13, 2016).

[iii]
(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_ednref 3) Horse Protection Act, 15 U.S.C.A. §§ 1821(3)(A)-(3)(D) (West 2016).

[iv]
(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_ednref 4) Wayne Pacelle, *USDA Lab Results Show Horse Soring Crowd Looks More Than Ever Like Organized Criminals* (http://blog.humanesociety.org/wayne/2016/02/usda-lab-results-walking-horse-celebration.html?credit=blog_post_020216_id7898), The Humane Soc'y of the U.S. (Feb. 2, 2016),
http://blog.humanesociety.org/wayne/2016/02/usda-lab-results-walking-horse-celebration.html?credit=blog_post_072616_id8327.

[v]
(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_ednref 5) Joanne Meszoly, *Why Soring Persists*, *Equus* (Nov. 2005),
http://equusmagazine.com/article/soring_030706-8192.

[vi]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_ednref6) 15 U.S.C.A § 1824 (West 2016).

[vii]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_ednref7) Sen. Lamar Alexander, *Senators Aim to End Soring While Preserving Walking Horse Tradition*, Am. Farriers J. (May 5, 2015), <https://www.americanfarriers.com/articles/6290-senators-aim-to-end-soring-while-preserving-walking-horse-tradition>.

[viii]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_ednref8) *Horse Protection Amendments Act of 2015*, Am. Horse Council, <http://www.horsecouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Horse-Protection-Amendments-Act-of-2015.pdf> (last visited Sep. 13, 2016),.

[ix]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_ednref9) *Id.*

[x]

(file:///C:/Users/Evan/Documents/KJournal/2016%20blogs/Blogs/Williams%20Blog.docx#_ednref10) Humane Soc’y of the U.S., *supra* note i.

[XI]

(FILE:///C:/USERS/EVAN/DOCUMENTS/KJOURNAL/2016%20BLOGS/BLOGS/WILLIAMS%20BLOG.DOCX#_EDNREF11)
CONGRESS URGED TO ACT ON ANTI-HORSE SORING LEGISLATION IN EARLY 2016.
HUMANE SOC’Y OF THE U.S. (DEC. 22, 2015),
[HTTP://WWW.HUMANESOCIETY.ORG/NEWS/PRESS_RELEASES/2015/12/CONGRESS-URGED-TO-ACT-ON-HORSE-SORING-LEGISLATION122215.HTML](http://www.humanesociety.org/news/press_releases/2015/12/congress-urged-to-act-on-horse-soring-legislation122215.html).

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