

It is fitting that this bill has garnered such a strong show of support. I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation, to continue working with a sense of common purpose when it comes to supporting our servicemembers, military families, and veterans.

Members of Congress display this flag in front of our Washington and district offices because we believe we must honor the more than 81,000 servicemembers our government says are missing or unaccounted for since World War II.

Let's ensure these displays happen across Federal properties throughout the year. Let's ensure the words emblazoned on the POW/MIA flag continue to communicate our support and commitment for our Nation's heroes and their families. You are not forgotten.

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, again, I commend those who have pursued the introduction and passage of this important legislation. And along with the comments of my colleague from New Hampshire, "they will never be forgotten," we will continue to fly the POW/MIA flag alongside the American flag.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CLINE) said, this is a straightforward bill that rightly requires that the flag be flown effectively every day at certain locations at great significance to our country and to our Armed Forces and veterans.

It is an appropriate way to honor all those who served, and particularly, those who have been held prisoners and who remain missing because of their service to our Nation in wartime. Therefore, I urge prompt passage of S. 693.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS) for his work on the bill, and Senator WARREN. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 693.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PREVENTING ANIMAL CRUELTY AND TORTURE ACT

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 724) to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 724

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act" or the "PACT Act".

SEC. 2. REVISION OF SECTION 48.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 48 of title 18, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"§ 48. Animal crushing

"(a) OFFENSES.—

"(1) CRUSHING.—It shall be unlawful for any person to purposely engage in animal crushing in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

"(2) CREATION OF ANIMAL CRUSH VIDEOS.—It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly create an animal crush video, if—

"(A) the person intends or has reason to know that the animal crush video will be distributed in, or using a means or facility of, interstate or foreign commerce; or

"(B) the animal crush video is distributed in, or using a means or facility of, interstate or foreign commerce.

"(3) DISTRIBUTION OF ANIMAL CRUSH VIDEOS.—It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly sell, market, advertise, exchange, or distribute an animal crush video in, or using a means or facility of, interstate or foreign commerce.

"(b) EXTRATERRITORIAL APPLICATION.—This section applies to the knowing sale, marketing, advertising, exchange, distribution, or creation of an animal crush video outside of the United States, if—

"(1) the person engaging in such conduct intends or has reason to know that the animal crush video will be transported into the United States or its territories or possessions; or

"(2) the animal crush video is transported into the United States or its territories or possessions.

"(c) PENALTIES.—Whoever violates this section shall be fined under this title, imprisoned for not more than 7 years, or both.

"(d) EXCEPTIONS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—This section does not apply with regard to any conduct, or a visual depiction of that conduct, that is—

"(A) a customary and normal veterinary, agricultural husbandry, or other animal management practice;

"(B) the slaughter of animals for food;

"(C) hunting, trapping, fishing, a sporting activity not otherwise prohibited by Federal law, predator control, or pest control;

"(D) medical or scientific research;

"(E) necessary to protect the life or property of a person; or

"(F) performed as part of euthanizing an animal.

"(2) GOOD-FAITH DISTRIBUTION.—This section does not apply to the good-faith distribution of an animal crush video to—

"(A) a law enforcement agency; or

"(B) a third party for the sole purpose of analysis to determine if referral to a law enforcement agency is appropriate.

"(3) UNINTENTIONAL CONDUCT.—This section does not apply to unintentional conduct that injures or kills an animal.

"(4) CONSISTENCY WITH RFRA.—This section shall be enforced in a manner that is consistent with section 3 of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 2000bb-1).

"(e) NO PREEMPTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to preempt the law of any State or local subdivision thereof to protect animals.

"(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

"(1) the term 'animal crushing' means actual conduct in which one or more living non-human mammals, birds, reptiles, or am-

phibians is purposely crushed, burned, drowned, suffocated, impaled, or otherwise subjected to serious bodily injury (as defined in section 1365 and including conduct that, if committed against a person and in the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States, would violate section 2241 or 2242);

"(2) the term 'animal crush video' means any photograph, motion-picture film, video or digital recording, or electronic image that—

"(A) depicts animal crushing; and

"(B) is obscene; and

"(3) the term 'euthanizing an animal' means the humane destruction of an animal accomplished by a method that—

"(A) produces rapid unconsciousness and subsequent death without evidence of pain or distress; or

"(B) uses anesthesia produced by an agent that causes painless loss of consciousness and subsequent death."

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 3 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 48 and inserting the following:

"48. Animal crushing."

SEC. 3. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, and the amendments made by this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. RESCHENTHALER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 724, the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act, or the PACT Act.

I give special thanks to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BUCHANAN), my colleague. He is a longstanding friend of animals in Congress, and I am thrilled that he agreed to introduce this bill with me to create a Federal law punishing those who abuse animals.

I also would like to acknowledge Congressman HOLDING and the hard work by groups like the Humane Society and Humane Rescue Alliance, who have helped collect 290 bipartisan cosponsors for this bill. There are so many groups and people from across the country who have supported this

bill—people like Lisa Vanderpump, who added her passion and commitment to animals to our effort, and groups who rescue animals, literally, in every corner of our country every single day.

I would also acknowledge and thank one person in particular, Mr. Speaker—a high school student, one who is so committed to helping animals, caring for animals, that when she learned about the PACT Act, she started an on-line petition hoping to collect a few thousand signatures. That petition urging Congress to pass this bill gathered over 729,000 signers. And I am thrilled that that young activist, Sydney Helfand, is with us in the gallery today.

Now, of all the divisive issues here in Washington, the PACT Act is one on which we can all agree, we must make animal abuse a Federal crime. This bill has received so much bipartisan support, because Americans care about animal welfare. We form deep relationships with our companion animals and are rightfully outraged by cases of animal abuse. Animal rights activities stand up for living things that do not have a voice. That is what the PACT Act does.

Americans expect their law enforcement agencies to crack down on this horrific violence against animals, and law enforcement officers agree, which is why the PACT Act has been endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, and local law enforcement agencies across the country. They have asked for this Federal law to bolster their efforts to target animal abusers, because they understand the direct link between animal abuse and violent crimes. This link is why the FBI now collects data on acts of cruelty against animals for their criminal database, right alongside felony crimes like assault and homicide.

When I first came to Congress, one of the first bills I voted on was the Animal Crush Video Prohibition Act, a bill that passed nearly unanimously and that it made it a crime to create or distribute animal crush videos, which depict horrific acts against animals.

This bill today takes the next logical step and criminalizes those acts underlying that crime as well.

The Senate passed the PACT Act by unanimous consent in the last two Congresses, and I am proud the House is finally doing its part to pass this important legislation. Today, anyone who inflicts serious bodily injury on animals will be committing an act for which they should be condemned. When the PACT Act passes, they will also be violating Federal law.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the PACT Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members to avoid referencing occupants of the gallery.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 724, the bipartisan Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act, or the PACT Act, introduced by Representative TED DEUTCH and VERN BUCHANAN.

In 2017, Pennsylvania passed Libre's Law, which increased penalties for animal abuse. I was honored to help push that legislation over the finish line in the Pennsylvania State Senate. I am proud to once again help pass legislation that will better protect our Nation's animals.

In 2010, Congress passed the Animal Crush Video Prohibition Act to address the trade in obscene videos of live animals being crushed, burned, or subjected to other forms of heinous cruelty. While this was an important first step, the law only bans the trade in video depictions of cruelty, not the underlying act of cruelty itself.

The PACT Act addresses this gap by prohibiting the underlying acts of animal cruelty that occur on Federal property or affect interstate commerce, regardless of whether a video is produced.

As a former district judge, I served on the frontlines of our judicial system. I witnessed firsthand the connection between animal cruelty and violence toward people. In fact, the FBI recently recognized that addressing animal cruelty is critical to protecting our communities.

The PACT Act would give Federal law enforcement and prosecutors the tools they need to combat extreme animal cruelty. This bill would give the FBI the authority to act against animal cruelty that is discovered while investigating another interstate crime, such as drug smuggling or human trafficking.

The PACT Act would not interfere with enforcement of State laws related to felony animal cruelty provisions. The legislation focuses solely on extreme acts of animal cruelty and exempts normal agriculture and hunting practices.

The PACT Act is endorsed by the National Sheriffs' Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, as well as more than 100 law enforcement agencies.

And in the Senate, the PACT Act is sponsored by my good friend, Pennsylvania Senator PAT TOOMEY, and it passed in both the 114th and the 115th Congresses by unanimous consent. In the House, it currently has more than 300 bipartisan cosponsors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the PACT Act so we can better protect our Nation's animals from abuse and torture. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. AXNE).

Mrs. AXNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representatives DEUTCH and BUCHANAN

for this bill. I am very excited to be able to vote for it today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the PACT Act, and am grateful for the support that it has. As a longtime animal lover and advocate, and somebody who worked to take care of the puppy mill issues that we have in my own State of Iowa, I know more than anybody that there is nothing like bringing animals to the forefront that brings people together.

This is absolutely a bipartisan issue. And while the Animal Crush Video Prohibition Act prohibits trade in obscene video depictions of live animals being tortured, as Representative DEUTCH said, the bill did nothing to prohibit the underlying conduct of the cruelty itself. This is what the PACT Act does.

It strengthens the animal crush video law by prohibiting animal cruelty, regardless of whether a video is produced. There is documented connection between animal cruelty and violence to people. In fact, studies show animal abusers are five times more likely to commit violent crimes against people, and it is linked to domestic violence, as well as child and elder abuse.

The PACT Act gives Federal law enforcement and prosecutors the tools they need to combat extreme animal cruelty and to protect our communities at the same time. Whether it is the veterinarian in my own State of Iowa—ranked 49th when it comes to animal welfare laws—who was recently arrested for debarking dogs by shoving rod-like objects into their vocal chambers without anesthesia, or whether it is in my neighboring State of Nebraska, where a man was recently accused of severely burning a cat by holding it under water, scalding hot water, across this country, people are torturing animals and it absolutely has to stop.

So tomorrow, on Make a Dog's Day, which is in support of encouraging dog adoption, let's do these companion animal friends of ours one better by a unanimous vote for the PACT Act today and put an end to the horrible acts of cruelty that should not be allowed in this country.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK), my good friend.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I join with my bipartisan colleagues here to proclaim that animal abuse is unacceptable and must end, which is why we are all proud to be supporters, and many of us, original cosponsors of the PACT Act because it strengthens Federal law regarding animal cruelty.

□ 1645

As was previously mentioned, the Animal Crush Video Act of 2010 banned the creation and distribution of these despicable videos. However, it did not make the actual animal abuse itself a crime.

The bipartisan PACT Act goes a step further and outlaws this malicious animal cruelty, regardless of the presence of video evidence.

Mr. Speaker, as a former FBI agent, my agency's profiling studies demonstrated how violence against animals is a precursor to human violence. That is why we are fighting aggressively against egregious animal cruelty and why it is so important.

Law enforcement, including the FOP, strongly supports this legislation because it provides another tool for them to use for animal abuse cases that might otherwise go unprosecuted.

More than 100 law enforcement agencies and organizations across our country have endorsed the PACT Act. We must come together and stand up for innocent, defenseless animals, which is why there are over 300—in fact, 301, to be exact—cosponsors, both Democrats and Republicans, on this bill.

I commend Senator TOOMEY, our colleague from Pennsylvania, for introducing the companion bill in the Senate. We must pass the PACT Act as soon as possible so that it can be signed into law, and we must make sure that this type of animal abuse no longer happens.

Together, we will end all types of animal cruelty and will continue to be a voice for the voiceless.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), the chairman of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus, an original cosponsor of the PACT Act, and a great voice for animals and animal rights.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy and his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, it is a breath of fresh air for us in these sort of, shall we say, troubled times in our Nation's Capital, when there is so much discord and disagreement, and it seems we can't really agree on fundamental facts: Is today Tuesday or Wednesday?

Animal welfare is one of those issues that brings people together on a bipartisan basis.

I am pleased that the bipartisan Congressional Animal Welfare Caucus has been involved in advancing this. Animal cruelty has been an area in which I have been involved since the beginning of my tenure in Congress. We fought, in farm bills, for years to try to advance protections against animal cruelty.

I am pleased that we are here today dealing with something where Congress has already acted to make these provisions illegal. But what we haven't done is make it illegal to depict these horrific crush videos.

It was horrifying, when we brought that legislation to the floor, for people to understand what some sick, sadistic people do in portraying these horrific acts of cruelty. What we find is that it is linked to larger issues.

People who abuse animals are often linked to horrific instances of violence

against their family and community. It is dehumanizing to us all, as well as, of course, the cruelty that is involved there.

We need to enact this legislation to make the actual creation of the depiction of the animals being abused illegal.

For example, the PACT Act would allow for charges to be brought against a puppy mill operator who is drowning unwanted animals if he is engaged in interstate activity. It would take strides to protect our overall communities from violent crime.

I would hope that this would also signal more activity on the floor of this House because we have a range of legislation that is teed up and ready to go that has broad, bipartisan support.

I appreciate the fact that we are getting 290, or whatever the number is, but life is short. We ought to be able to move these items with broad, bipartisan support to the floor.

We shouldn't necessarily be here just renaming post offices on a Monday. I mean, these are substantive issues that matter to people. We ought to be moving them through. I think this is an important first step, and I am pleased to add my support to it.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS).

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, we are standing here today in support of the PACT Act, to make it a crime to commit abuse that has already been detected in videos or the videos that we have made illegal.

We need to render the acts illegal. We need to enforce detection. We need to support enforcement writ large. We need to stand up for the rights of animals and stand up against animal cruelty.

I come from the great State of Michigan, and this is something that I have heard from my residents from all corridors throughout my district.

We are home to great equine farms as well as other establishments that care for animals, and that is a message that we want to put forward. We want to stop animal abuse on the front end and also stop other forms of domestic abuse that may arise from it.

I led the Department of Justice appropriations process that directs the use of Department of Justice funds to enforce our Nation's animal cruelty laws. Today, with the PACT Act, we are realizing another important step in protecting the rights of animals and in stopping abuse before it starts.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 724, the PACT Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, we should do everything we can to prevent the torture of animals and take steps to hold accountable those who would engage in such horrific acts.

The PACT Act is a significant Federal measure to help put an end to the abuse of animals.

I am thankful to be on the House floor at this incredibly gratifying bipartisan moment, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan bill.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge every companion animal that has brought love to my staff members since the PACT Act was first introduced. Those would be Thomas Jefferson, Desi, Stella, Dock, Bubba, Maple, Hazel, Cheech, Ollie, Frodo, Theo, Johnson Tiki, Tankford, Littleman, Natale, Enzo, Dino, Virgil, Rooney, Maybeline, Prudence, Peppermint, Nazca, Poseidon, Gus, Sansa, Tony, Dwyane Wade, and my dearly departed Jessie.

For all of them and for every animal who brings joy to everyone in this Chamber, let's do our part to prevent animal cruelty and torture, and let's pass the PACT Act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 724, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DIVISIONAL REALIGNMENT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS ACT OF 2019

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1123) to amend title 28, United States Code, to modify the composition of the eastern judicial district of Arkansas, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1123

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Divisional Realignment for the Eastern District of Arkansas Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. REALIGNMENT OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS.

Section 83(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"Eastern District

"(a) The Eastern District comprises three divisions.

"(1) The Central Division comprises the counties of Cleburne, Cleveland, Conway, Dallas, Drew, Faulkner, Grant, Jefferson, Lincoln, Lonoke, Perry, Pope, Prairie, Pulaski, Saline, Stone, Van Buren, White, and Yell.

Court for the Central Division shall be held at Little Rock.

"(2) The Delta Division comprises the counties of Arkansas, Chicot, Crittenden, Desha, Lee, Monroe, Phillips, and St. Francis.

Court for the Delta Division shall be held at Helena.