

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 5999

To amend the Animal Welfare Act to restrict the use of exotic and wild animals in traveling performances.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 17, 2021

Mr. GRIJALVA (for himself, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DEFazio, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. KUSTER, Ms. NORTON, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. DEAN, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. SIRES, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. BROWNLEY, Ms. BASS, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. TRONE, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. CARSON, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. TONKO, Ms. JACOBS of California, Mrs. HAYES, and Mr. MALINOWSKI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

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## A BILL

To amend the Animal Welfare Act to restrict the use of exotic and wild animals in traveling performances.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### 3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Traveling Exotic Ani-  
5 mal and Public Safety Protection Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds that—

3 (1) conditions inherent to traveling perform-  
4 ances, including constant travel, temporary and col-  
5 lapsible facilities, and the prolonged confinement  
6 and physical coercion of animals, subject exotic and  
7 wild animals to compromised welfare and chronic  
8 stress, and present public and worker health and  
9 safety risks not adequately addressed by current reg-  
10 ulations;

11 (2) current regulatory oversight of traveling  
12 performances is complex and costly, and those costs  
13 are not typically recouped via licensing fees but are  
14 left to the taxpayer;

15 (3) the frequent mobility of traveling perform-  
16 ances complicates oversight such that agencies and  
17 authorities cannot properly monitor, evaluate, or fol-  
18 low through regarding the condition of animals or  
19 facilities, or their history of potential injuries, inci-  
20 dents, illnesses, violations, or other issues, and so  
21 cannot properly protect animals, workers, or the  
22 public;

23 (4) traveling exotic and wild animal perform-  
24 ances use collapsible, temporary, mobile facilities,  
25 which risk escape and serious harm to animals,  
26 workers, and the public;

1           (5) traveling exotic and wild animal perform-  
2           ances present safety risks by permitting or not pre-  
3           venting public contact and by displaying animals in  
4           inappropriate, uncontrolled areas in dangerous prox-  
5           imity to humans and other animals;

6           (6) exotic and wild animals have intrinsic value;

7           (7) the wild instincts and needs of exotic and  
8           wild animals are unpredictable and not naturally  
9           suited to traveling performances, and exotic and wild  
10          animals thus suffer as a result of being unable to  
11          fulfill instinctive natural behaviors;

12          (8) exotic and wild animals used in traveling  
13          performances suffer severe and extended confine-  
14          ment, and, deprived of natural movements and be-  
15          haviors, are prone to chronic stress and behavioral,  
16          health, and psychological problems;

17          (9) exotic and wild animals are forced to per-  
18          form unnatural tricks requiring extreme physical co-  
19          ercion, including the use of food and water restric-  
20          tions, electric shock devices, bullhooks, metal bars,  
21          whips, shovels, pitchforks, and other abuses;

22          (10) it is not necessary to use exotic or wild  
23          animals in traveling performances to experience the  
24          circus or similar events;

1           (11) using exotic or wild animals as commod-  
2           ities traded for traveling performances adds nothing  
3           to the understanding and conservation of those ani-  
4           mals and the natural environment, and actually un-  
5           dermines conservation efforts necessary to protect  
6           threatened and endangered species;

7           (12) it is not possible to provide or ensure pub-  
8           lic and worker safety or appropriate physical and  
9           mental welfare of exotic and wild animals under the  
10          traveling performance business model, which inher-  
11          ently and significantly restricts the natural move-  
12          ments and behaviors of animals, and in which abuse  
13          is prevalent and oversight problematic;

14          (13) the use of exotic or wild animals in trav-  
15          eling performances is or substantially affects inter-  
16          state or foreign commerce and the free flow of inter-  
17          state or foreign commerce;

18          (14) it is essential to regulate the use of exotic  
19          or wild animals in traveling performances to ensure  
20          the humane care and treatment of animals; and

21          (15) restricting the use of exotic and wild ani-  
22          mals in traveling performances is the most cost-ef-  
23          fective and efficient way to safeguard animals, work-  
24          ers, and the public.

1 **SEC. 3. USE OF EXOTIC OR WILD ANIMALS IN TRAVELING**  
2 **PERFORMANCES PROHIBITED.**

3 Section 13 of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C.  
4 2143) is amended—

5 (1) by redesignating subsections (g) and (h) as  
6 subsections (h) and (i), respectively;

7 (2) by redesignating the second subsection (f)  
8 (relating to delivery of animals by a dealer, research  
9 facility, exhibitor, or government) as subsection (g);  
10 and

11 (3) by adding at the end the following:

12 “(j) PROHIBITION OF EXOTIC AND WILD ANIMALS  
13 IN TRAVELING PERFORMANCES.—

14 “(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

15 “(A) CAUSE A PERFORMANCE.—The term  
16 ‘cause a performance’ means—

17 “(i) to be responsible for a perform-  
18 ance;

19 “(ii) to financially benefit as an owner  
20 or operator from a performance; or

21 “(iii) to sponsor a performance.

22 “(B) DOMESTIC ANIMAL.—The term ‘do-  
23 mestic animal’ means any animal that is nor-  
24 mally maintained as a companion or pet animal  
25 in or near the household of the owner or person  
26 who cares for the animal, such as a domestic

1 dog (including a service dog), domestic cat, fer-  
2 ret, gerbil, horse, mouse, rat, guinea pig, rabbit,  
3 or hamster.

4 “(C) ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PRO-  
5 GRAM.—The term ‘environmental education  
6 program’ means a program, which may be an  
7 animal exhibition, that—

8 “(i) is professionally designed to im-  
9 part knowledge or information for edu-  
10 cational or conservation purposes about the  
11 natural behavior, habitat, and life cycle of  
12 an animal, or similar pedagogical informa-  
13 tion, by an individual qualified to impart  
14 that information; and

15 “(ii) does not include any performance  
16 of behavior of an animal that does not nat-  
17 urally occur for that animal in the wild.

18 “(D) EXOTIC OR WILD ANIMAL.—

19 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘exotic  
20 or wild animal’ means—

21 “(I) any animal that is or has  
22 historically been found in the wild or  
23 in the wild state, regardless of wheth-  
24 er the animal was bred or born in the  
25 wild or in captivity; and

1 “(II) any hybrid of an animal de-  
 2 scribed in subclause (I), including a  
 3 hybrid cross with a domestic animal  
 4 or farm animal.

5 “(ii) INCLUSIONS.—The term ‘exotic  
 6 or wild animal’ includes—

7 “(I) canidae (except domestic  
 8 dogs);

9 “(II) cetartiodactyla (except al-  
 10 pacas, bison, cattle, deer, elk, goats,  
 11 llamas, reindeer, swine, and sheep);

12 “(III) crocodilia;

13 “(IV) edentata;

14 “(V) elasmobranchii;

15 “(VI) felidae (except domestic  
 16 cats);

17 “(VII) hyaenidae;

18 “(VIII) marsupialia;

19 “(IX) mustelidae;

20 “(X) nonhuman primates;

21 “(XI) perissodactyla (except  
 22 horses, donkeys, and mules);

23 “(XII) pinnipedia;

24 “(XIII) proboscidea;

25 “(XIV) procyonidae;

- 1 “(XV) ratites;  
2 “(XVI) spheniscidae;  
3 “(XVII) testudinidae;  
4 “(XVIII) ursidae;  
5 “(XIX) varanidae; and  
6 “(XX) viverridae.

7 “(iii) EXCLUSION.—The term ‘exotic  
8 or wild animal’ does not include any ani-  
9 mal that is a domestic animal or farm ani-  
10 mal.

11 “(E) FARM ANIMAL.—The term ‘farm ani-  
12 mal’ means an alpaca, cow, sheep, swine, goat,  
13 llama, poultry, rabbit, horse, mule, or donkey.

14 “(F) MOBILE OR TRAVELING HOUSING FA-  
15 CILITY.—The term ‘mobile or traveling housing  
16 facility’ means a transporting vehicle, such as a  
17 truck, car, trailer, airplane, ship, or railway car,  
18 used to transport or house an animal while  
19 traveling to, from, or between locations for per-  
20 formance purposes.

21 “(G) PERFORMANCE.—The term ‘perform-  
22 ance’ means any animal act, circus, ride, car-  
23 nival, display, exhibition, fair, parade, petting  
24 zoo, race, performance, or similar undertaking  
25 in which an animal is required to perform



1           tricks, give rides, or participate as an accom-  
2           paniment for the entertainment, amusement, or  
3           benefit of an audience.

4           “(H) TRAVELING ANIMAL ACT.—The term  
5           ‘traveling animal act’ means any performance  
6           of an animal for which the animal is trans-  
7           ported in a mobile or traveling housing facility  
8           to, from, or between locations for the purpose  
9           of a performance.

10          “(I) WILDLIFE SANCTUARY.—The term  
11          ‘wildlife sanctuary’ means an organization  
12          that—

13               “(i) is described in sections  
14               170(b)(1)(A)(vi) and 501(c)(3) of the In-  
15               ternal Revenue Code of 1986;

16               “(ii) is a place of refuge that provides  
17               care for abused, neglected, unwanted, im-  
18               pounded, abandoned, orphaned, or dis-  
19               placed exotic or wild animals for the life-  
20               time of the exotic or wild animals; and

21               “(iii) does not—

22                       “(I) engage in commercial trade  
23                       in any exotic or wild animal, includ-  
24                       ing—

1 “(aa) the sale of any animal,  
2 animal part, or derivative off-  
3 spring;

4 “(bb) photographic opportu-  
5 nities; and

6 “(cc) public events for finan-  
7 cial profit or an entertainment  
8 purpose;

9 “(II) breed any exotic or wild  
10 animal;

11 “(III) permit unescorted public  
12 visitation;

13 “(IV) permit direct contact be-  
14 tween the public and any exotic or  
15 wild animal; or

16 “(V) remove any exotic or wild  
17 animal from a sanctuary or enclosure  
18 for exhibition or performance.

19 “(2) PROHIBITED USE OF EXOTIC AND WILD  
20 ANIMALS.—Subject to paragraph (3), no person  
21 shall cause a performance of, or allow for the par-  
22 ticipation of, an exotic or wild animal in a traveling  
23 animal act.

24 “(3) EXCEPTIONS.—Paragraph (2) shall not  
25 apply to—

1 “(A) the use of an exotic or wild animal—

2 “(i) in an exhibition at a nonmobile,  
3 permanent institution, zoo, or aquarium  
4 accredited by the Association of Zoos and  
5 Aquariums, the World Association of Zoos  
6 and Aquariums, or the Global Federation  
7 of Animal Sanctuaries;

8 “(ii) as part of an environmental edu-  
9 cation program by a facility accredited by  
10 the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, if  
11 the animal used as part of the program is  
12 not—

13 “(I) used for more than 180 total  
14 days during a year; and

15 “(II) kept in a mobile or trav-  
16 eling housing facility for more than  
17 12 total hours during a day;

18 “(iii) by an institution of higher edu-  
19 cation, laboratory, or other research facil-  
20 ity registered under section 6 for the pur-  
21 pose of conducting research;

22 “(iv) in film, television, or advertising,  
23 if the use does not involve a live animal ex-  
24 hibition conducted before a public studio  
25 audience; or

1 “(v) in a rodeo;

2 “(B) the use of an indigenous wild animal  
3 by a wildlife rehabilitator in an environmental  
4 education program—

5 “(i) that is permitted by the relevant  
6 jurisdiction;

7 “(ii) that is accredited or certified by  
8 the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Asso-  
9 ciation or the International Wildlife Reha-  
10 bilitation Council; and

11 “(iii) if the exotic or wild animal is  
12 kept in a mobile or traveling housing facil-  
13 ity for not more than 12 total hours during  
14 a day;

15 “(C) a federally permitted falconer; or

16 “(D) a wildlife sanctuary.

17 “(4) PENALTY.—Any person that fails to com-  
18 ply with this subsection shall be subject to the en-  
19 forcement and penalties described in sections 16, 19,  
20 and 29.

21 “(5) RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER LAW.—

22 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this sub-  
23 section—

24 “(i) authorizes the interstate trans-  
25 port of any species listed as threatened or

1           endangered under the Endangered Species  
2           Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or  
3           “(ii) waives any requirement to com-  
4           ply with any regulation issued under this  
5           Act.

6           “(B) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—The  
7           standards and requirements of this sub-  
8           section—

9           “(i) are in addition to, and not in lieu  
10          of, any other laws protecting animal wel-  
11          fare; and

12          “(ii) do not limit any other Federal,  
13          State, or local law or rule that more strin-  
14          gently protects the welfare of animals.

15          “(C) PREEMPTION.—No State or political  
16          subdivision of a State may establish or continue  
17          to enforce any standards, requirements, or reg-  
18          ulations with respect to causing a performance  
19          of, or allowing for the participation of, an exotic  
20          or wild animal in a traveling animal act that  
21          are inconsistent with or less stringent than the  
22          standards and requirements under this sub-  
23          section.”.

1 **SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

2       The amendments made by this Act shall take effect  
3 on the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment  
4 of this Act.

