

**DRAFT ONLY
NOT APPROVED FOR
INTRODUCTION**

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO.

Horse management methods.

Sponsored by: Representative(s) Wharff

A JOINT RESOLUTION

for

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION requesting Congress to enact legislation
2 to amend the federal Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros
3 Act to remove the restrictions on and authorize additional
4 methods for the management and disposition of wild horses and
5 burros, to amend federal funding restrictions to allow for
6 the destruction of healthy, unadopted wild horses and burros,
7 to amend the federal Hunting Wild Horses and Burros on Public
8 Lands Act to authorize the use of helicopters or motor
9 vehicles to capture wild horses and burros, to restore federal
10 funding for inspectors of horses for slaughter and in the
11 alternative to amend the federal Meat Inspection Act to allow
12 states to fund their own inspectors for the purposes of
13 inspecting horse meat.

1

2 WHEREAS, the federal Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act
3 of 1971 (the Act), as amended, protects wild horses and burros
4 from harassment or death and declares that wild free-roaming
5 horses and burros are living symbols of the historic and
6 pioneer spirit of the West; and

7

8 WHEREAS, the Act directs the secretary of the United States
9 department of interior through the bureau of land management
10 (BLM) to manage wild horses and burros within the areas where
11 these animals were found roaming in 1971; and

12

13 WHEREAS, under the Act, the BLM must inventory wild horse and
14 burro populations periodically to determine appropriate
15 management levels (AMLs). An AML is the population range at
16 which wild horse and burro populations are consistent with
17 the land's capacity to support them and other mandated uses
18 of those lands; and

19

20 WHEREAS, under the Act, the BLM is authorized to remove wild
21 horses and burros to achieve AMLs upon the respective agency's
22 determination that an overpopulation exists. When necessary
23 to achieve AMLs for herds of wild horses and burros, the BLM

1 relies on a combination of management tools including
2 fertility control and removal of excess horses; and
3

4 WHEREAS, under the Act, the BLM is authorized to remove wild
5 horses and burros through adoption, sale, transfer or
6 otherwise dispose of wild horses and burros pursuant to law;
7 and
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9 WHEREAS, the Act prohibits the malicious or negligent
10 injuring, harassing or causing the death of a wild horse or
11 burro and the destroying of a wild horse or burro without
12 authorization except in the case of humane destruction; and
13

14 WHEREAS, the Act also prohibits the direct and indirect
15 selling or attempted selling of a wild horse or burro or the
16 horse's or burro's remains, and the processing or permitting
17 the processing of the remains of a wild horse or burro into
18 commercial products; and
19

20 WHEREAS, Congress has prohibited the United States department
21 of interior from expending funds for the "destruction of
22 healthy, unadopted, wild horses and burros in the care of the
23 [BLM] or its contractors or for the sale of wild horses and

1 burros that results in their destruction for processing into
2 commercial products" in the United States department of
3 interior's appropriation acts from 1988 to 2004 then again
4 from 2010 to present; and

5
6 WHEREAS, the state of Wyoming is faced with an overpopulation
7 of wild horses; and

8
9 WHEREAS, as of March 1, 2026, there are an estimated seven
10 thousand one hundred sixty-five (7,165) wild horses and zero
11 (0) burros in the state of Wyoming; and

12
13 WHEREAS, the maximum AML for Wyoming's herd management areas
14 is two thousand five hundred sixty-six (2,566) wild horses
15 and burros; and

16
17 WHEREAS, the wild horse and burro population currently
18 exceeds the AML by at least five thousand (5,000) wild horses
19 and burros; and

20
21 WHEREAS, with virtually no natural predators, wild horse and
22 burro populations can double every four (4) to five (5) years
23 if left unchecked; and

1

2 WHEREAS, responsible management of wild horse and burro
3 populations is vital to protect scarce and fragile resources
4 in the arid West and ensure healthy wildlife and livestock;
5 and

6

7 WHEREAS, for example, the presence of wild horses and burros
8 at water sources deters keystone species such as pronghorn
9 antelope from accessing critical water in the species'
10 natural ranges, thus further stressing these important
11 species; and

12

13 WHEREAS, without responsible management, the resources in the
14 arid West cannot be managed for multiple-use because wild
15 horses unduly infringe upon other uses by damaging riverbeds
16 and overgrazing on limited forage, while using and often
17 damaging the infrastructure of other public land users and
18 private landowners; and

19

20 WHEREAS, the federal Hunting Wild Horses and Burros on Public
21 Land Act prohibits any person from using an aircraft or motor
22 vehicle to hunt, for the purpose of capturing or killing, any

1 wild horses or burros running at large on any public lands or
2 ranges; and

3

4 WHEREAS, the BLM and the United States forest service are
5 exempted from this prohibition and frequently utilize
6 helicopters to herd or chase wild horses or burros for capture
7 under the federal Hunting Wild Horses and Burros on Public
8 Lands Act to great success; and

9

10 WHEREAS, the federal Meat Inspection Act authorizes the
11 secretary of the United States department of agriculture to
12 appoint inspectors to examine and inspect certain species
13 before the animal enters into any slaughtering establishment
14 to be slaughtered for use as meat or in meat food products;
15 and

16

17 WHEREAS, without inspection by these appointed inspectors,
18 slaughtering establishments are prohibited from operating in
19 the United States; and

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21 WHEREAS, Congress has not provided federal funding for
22 inspectors of horses for slaughter under the federal Meat
23 Inspection Act from 2005 to 2012 then 2014 to present in

1 appropriations bills for the United States department of
2 agriculture, thus making the slaughter of horses in a
3 slaughter establishment essentially impossible; and

4
5 WHEREAS, horse abandonment resulting from financial hardship
6 or the inability to care for aged or ill horses contributes
7 to challenges similar to those associated with the
8 overpopulation of wild horses; and

9
10 WHEREAS, the overabundance of wild horses and burros and
11 abandoned horses have outpaced current methods of management
12 permitted under law; and

13
14 WHEREAS, the state of Wyoming needs additional tools to manage
15 these wild horses and burros and abandoned horses, including
16 the authority to utilize slaughter as a management option and
17 to inspect horse meat within the state without federal
18 restrictions.

19
20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE
21 LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WYOMING:

22
23 **Section 1.**

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2 (a) That the Wyoming Legislature requests that Congress
3 introduce and enact legislation:

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5 (i) To amend the federal Wild and Free-Roaming
6 Horses and Burros Act to remove the restrictions on the
7 management and disposition of wild horses and burros and to
8 authorize additional methods for the management and
9 disposition of those animals; and

10

11 (ii) To amend federal funding restrictions to allow
12 for the destruction of healthy, unadopted wild horses and
13 burros by the BLM, either directly or through sale to
14 processors, that will result in the destruction of those
15 animals.

16

17 **Section 2.** That the Wyoming Legislature requests that
18 Congress introduce and enact legislation to amend the federal
19 Hunting Wild Horses and Burros on Public Lands Act to
20 authorize any person to use helicopters or motor vehicles to
21 capture or kill wild horses and burros.

22

23 **Section 3.**

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2 (a) That the Wyoming Legislature requests that Congress
3 introduce and enact legislation:

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5 (i) To restore federal funding for the salaries and
6 expenses of personnel to inspect horses under section 3 of
7 the federal Meat Inspection Act and the guidelines issued
8 under section 903 of the federal Agriculture Improvement and
9 Reform Act of 1996; or

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11 (ii) To amend the federal Meat Inspection Act to
12 authorize states to fund inspectors for the purpose of
13 inspecting horse meat.

14

15 **Section 4.** That the Secretary of State of Wyoming
16 transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the
17 United States, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker
18 of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress
19 and to the Wyoming Congressional Delegation.

20

(END)