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CONTACT: [Emily Lawrimore](#) or [Jill Strait](#)
202-226-2311

Ranking Member Hastings' Floor Speech on the Democrats' \$700 Million Wild Horses Welfare Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) spoke on the House floor today against the Democrats' misplaced priorities to hold a vote on a bill to create a new \$700 million welfare program for wild horses at a time when 9.5 percent of Americans are unemployed and our federal deficit has grown to a historic \$1 trillion. Full video and text of the speech follows:*



Click [HERE](#) to watch the floor speech

“Mr. Speaker, across our nation, Americans are struggling to pay their bills.

9.5 percent of Americans are out of work - this is the highest unemployment rate our nation has experienced in over a quarter of a century.

President Obama and his economic advisors expect the number of jobless to climb higher, into the double digits.

After bailouts for Wall Street and a stimulus bill that cost hundreds of billions of dollars and still isn't creating the jobs that Democrats promised, the national deficit has now hit one trillion dollars – an historic and worrying amount that President Obama has said keeps him awake at night.

Mr. Speaker, Americans are hurting. Our economy is in a recession.

Two million jobs have been lost since the stimulus bill passed in February.

Government spending is going through the roof. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that since January, the Obama and Pelosi budgets will lead to increased spending of \$2.6 trillion over the next ten years.

With this backdrop, what is the response of this Democrat Congress to month after month of lost jobs, record unemployment, out-of-control spending and skyrocketing deficits?

There response it to vote on a bill to create a \$700 million welfare program for wild horses and burros.

If the American people want an illustration of just how out-of-control this Congress has become on spending, they need to look no further than what's happening here today with wild horses and burros.

Last Congress, the House passed legislation to ban the commercial slaughter of wild horses and burros. It was a one-page bill and CBO estimated it would cost taxpayers less than \$500,000 a year.

Now we're just two years from that time period, and we're looking at a bill again that also bans the slaughter of these animals, but then proceeds to spend a CBO-estimated \$700 million dollars to create a new welfare program for wild horses.

That's right, under the fiscal plan of this Democrat Congress, the amount they want to spend on wild horses from the last congress, which was \$500,000 to this Congress of \$700 million.

Let's take a look at what the taxpayers' dollars would be spent on in this vast increase of public spending:

- a wild horse census would be conducted every two years
- it provides "enhanced contraception" and birth control for these horses
- it would acquire or move 19 million acres of public and private land for the specific purpose of giving these horses more places to roam around. 19 million acres is roughly the size of the distinguished Chairman's state of West Virginia.
- five million dollars a year will then be spent to repair the damage that horses cause to these lands
- and there are new mandates that government bureaucrats perform home inspections before Americans can adopt a wild horse.

Just to be sure everyone understands, the taxpayers are being asked to buy up millions of

acres of land for the enjoyment of wild horses, and then taxpayers will have to pay 5 million dollars a year to repair the damage that these horses will do to these lands. Only in Washington, D.C. does this make sense.

Our country is in the middle of the worst recession in half a century.

14.7 million Americans are unemployed and can't find jobs.

How in the world can Democrats in Congress hold a vote on this bill?

Americans are hurting.

Republicans are focused on creating jobs in this country - but this Democrat Congress seems to be more worried about spending hundreds of millions of dollars on wild horses.

I reserve the balance of my time.”

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