

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8994

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to remove nonambulatory pigs from the United States food system, to establish an online portal for confidential complaints, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 11, 2024

Ms. ESCOBAR (for herself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. RASKIN, and Mr. CÁRDENAS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to remove nonambulatory pigs from the United States food system, to establish an online portal for confidential complaints, and for other purposes.

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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Pigs and Public Health Act”.

1 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
2 this Act is as follows:

See. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Findings.

Sec. 3. Definitions.

TITLE I—HUMANE HANDLING REFORMS FOR NONAMBULATORY PIGS

Sec. 101. Unlawful use of drugs contributing to nonambulatory conditions.

Sec. 102. Transportation of pigs.

Sec. 103. Unlawful slaughter practices involving pigs.

Sec. 104. OSHA standard and staffing requirement.

TITLE II—PUBLIC HEALTH TRANSPARENCY

Sec. 201. Online portal for confidential complaints.

Sec. 202. Whistleblower protection.

Sec. 203. Study and report on threat of nonambulatory pigs in food system.

3 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Humane euthanization of nonambulatory
6 pigs—

7 (A) prevents needless suffering;

8 (B) results in safer and better working
9 conditions for individuals handling pigs;

10 (C) brings about improvement of products
11 and reduces the likelihood of the spread of
12 zoonotic and other diseases that have a great
13 and deleterious economic impact; and

14 (D) protects the public health of con-
15 sumers by ensuring that products from non-
16 ambulatory pigs do not enter the food supply.

1 (2) Many nonambulatory pigs are ill and may
2 carry dangerous pathogens, posing a serious public
3 health risk, considering—

4 (A) in a 2008 study, significantly more
5 nonambulatory pigs than control pigs tested
6 positive for swine influenza viruses H1N1 and
7 H3N2;

8 (B) other studies have indicated that non-
9 ambulatory pigs may increase risk of trans-
10 mission of pathogens such as *Salmonella* and
11 *Yersinia enterocolitica* and may be more likely
12 to harbor antibiotic-resistant *Campylobacter*;
13 and

14 (C) the Centers for Disease Control and
15 Prevention estimates that pork containing
16 pathogens leads to about 525,000 infections,
17 2,900 hospitalizations, and 82 deaths in hu-
18 mans each year.

19 (3) Industrial operators have created a system
20 that allows for the inhumane handling of non-
21 ambulatory livestock that causes needless suffering,
22 unsafe working conditions, and the spread of
23 foodborne and zoonotic diseases.

1 (4) Industrial operators have abused the use of
2 certain drugs that increase the risk of pigs becoming
3 nonambulatory.

4 (5) Current Federal animal transport laws are
5 ineffective, inherently cruel, and cause pigs to be-
6 come nonambulatory.

7 (6) Employees and contract laborers on farms,
8 during transport, and at slaughter deal with non-
9 ambulatory pigs first hand, making them uniquely
10 positioned to report public health threats they wit-
11 ness.

12 (7) Since 2004, the Department of Agri-
13 culture's Food Safety and Inspection Service has
14 banned all nonambulatory cattle from entering the
15 Nation's food supply due to increased risk of disease
16 spread, but there are no such regulations for other
17 species.

18 (8) In 2002, Congress mandated that the De-
19 partment of Agriculture release a report regarding
20 nonambulatory animals, but no such report has been
21 released. The Department of Agriculture released a
22 report on nonambulatory cattle and calves in 2005
23 and a report on sheep and goats in 2006. No report
24 has been issued on nonambulatory pigs.

1 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) COVERED ENTITY.—The term “covered en-
4 tity” means—

5 (A) a stockyard;

6 (B) a market agency;

7 (C) a packer (as defined in section 201 of
8 the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7
9 U.S.C. 191));

10 (D) a dealer (as defined in section 301 of
11 the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7
12 U.S.C. 201));

13 (E) a slaughter facility; and

14 (F) an establishment subject to inspection
15 pursuant to the Federal Meat Inspection Act
16 (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.).

17 (2) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term “covered
18 individual” means any employee, former employee,
19 contractor, or other person who has worked or is
20 currently working for or with a covered entity.

21 (3) NONAMBULATORY PIG.—The term “non-
22 ambulatory pig” means any swine that cannot stand
23 or walk unassisted.

24 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
25 the Secretary of Agriculture.

1 **TITLE I—HUMANE HANDLING**
2 **REFORMS FOR NON-**
3 **AMBULATORY PIGS**

4 **SEC. 101. UNLAWFUL USE OF DRUGS CONTRIBUTING TO**
5 **NONAMBULATORY CONDITIONS.**

6 The Animal Health Protection Act is amended by in-
7 serting after section 10409A (7 U.S.C. 8308a) the fol-
8 lowing:

9 **“SEC. 10409B. UNLAWFUL USE OF BETA-ADRENERGIC**
10 **AGONIST DRUGS IN PIGS.**

11 “Any use of a beta-adrenergic agonist drug, including
12 ractopamine, zilpaterol, and lubabegron, in a pig in the
13 absence of disease, including use for growth promotion or
14 feed efficiency, is prohibited.”.

15 **SEC. 102. TRANSPORTATION OF PIGS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Animal Welfare Act is
17 amended by inserting after section 13 (7 U.S.C. 2143)
18 the following:

19 **“SEC. 13A. TRANSPORTATION OF PIGS.**

20 “(a) TRANSPORTATION.—In any case in which pigs
21 are transported by a covered provider of transportation
22 on behalf of a covered entity, the covered provider of
23 transportation transporting the pigs shall ensure that—

1 “(1) the means of transport provides adequate
2 protection of the pigs from high winds, rain, and
3 snow;

4 “(2) the pigs are provided with appropriate bed-
5 ding or equivalent material that—

6 “(A) prevents slipping;

7 “(B) ensures a level of comfort appropriate
8 to—

9 “(i) pigs;

10 “(ii) the number of pigs being trans-
11 ported;

12 “(iii) the duration of the period of
13 transportation; and

14 “(iv) the weather; and

15 “(C) provides adequate absorption of urine
16 and feces;

17 “(3) the pigs are not overcrowded during trans-
18 port;

19 “(4) the means of transport is equipped with a
20 water supply that ensures that each pig has access
21 to water in a manner and quantity appropriate to
22 the species and size of the animal;

23 “(5) watering devices on the means of transport
24 are—

25 “(A) in good working order;

1 “(B) appropriately designed; and
2 “(C) positioned appropriately for pigs to be
3 watered during transport;
4 “(6) the pigs have enough space—
5 “(A) to turn around;
6 “(B) to lie down; and
7 “(C) to fully extend their limbs; and
8 “(7) the pigs are not transported if the tem-
9 perature within the means of transport cannot be
10 maintained between 50 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit.

11 “(b) RECORDKEEPING.—

12 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each covered provider of
13 transportation shall maintain records of all pigs
14 transported by such covered provider on behalf of
15 any covered entity.

16 “(2) PRODUCTION OF RECORDS.—A covered
17 provider of transportation shall provide the records
18 maintained under paragraph (1) to the Secretary on
19 request.

20 “(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

21 “(1) COVERED ENTITY.—The term ‘covered en-
22 tity’ means—

23 “(A) a stockyard;
24 “(B) a market agency;

1 “(C) a packer (as defined in section 201 of
2 the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7
3 U.S.C. 191));

4 “(D) a dealer (as defined in section 301 of
5 the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7
6 U.S.C. 201));

7 “(E) a slaughter facility; and

8 “(F) an establishment.

9 “(2) COVERED PROVIDER OF TRANSPOR-
10 TATION.—The term ‘covered provider of transpor-
11 tation’ means any entity that provides transport of
12 livestock on behalf of a covered entity.

13 “(3) ESTABLISHMENT.—The term ‘establish-
14 ment’ means an establishment that is subject to in-
15 spection pursuant to the Federal Meat Inspection
16 Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.).”.

17 (b) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 1 year after the
18 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall promul-
19 gate final regulations to enforce the provisions of sub-
20 section (a).

21 **SEC. 103. UNLAWFUL SLAUGHTER PRACTICES INVOLVING
22 PIGS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Public Law 85–765 (commonly
24 known as the “Humane Methods of Slaughter Act of
25 1958”) is amended by adding at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 7. HUMANE TREATMENT OF PIGS.**

2 “(a) NONAMBULATORY PIGS.—

3 “(1) HUMANE TREATMENT, HANDLING, AND
4 DISPOSITION.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall
5 promulgate regulations to provide for the humane
6 treatment, handling, and disposition of all non-
7 ambulatory pigs by covered entities, including re-
8 quirements for a covered entity—9 “(A) to, subject to paragraph (2), imme-
10 diately humanely euthanize nonambulatory pigs
11 in the possession of the covered entity;12 “(B) to have written policies and proce-
13 dures in place, and proper equipment, relating
14 to the humane handling, euthanization, and dis-
15 position of all nonambulatory pigs in the pos-
16 session of the covered entity;17 “(C) to maintain records of all non-
18 ambulatory pigs in the possession of the covered
19 entity; and20 “(D) to electronically submit such written
21 policies and procedures and such records to the
22 Administrator of the Food Safety and Inspec-
23 tion Service.

24 “(2) HUMANE EUTHANASIA.—

25 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
26 promulgate regulations specifying—

1 “(i) the methods of euthanasia that
2 shall be acceptable for the humane disposi-
3 tion of nonambulatory pigs required under
4 the regulations promulgated under para-
5 graph (1); and

6 “(ii) processes for ensuring effective
7 enforcement of the use of such methods.

8 “(B) DISEASE TESTING.—The Secretary
9 shall test nonambulatory pigs for a disease,
10 such as swine influenza viruses H1N1 and
11 H3N2, *Salmonella*, *Yersinia enterocolitica*,
12 *Campylobacter*, and Methicillin-resistant Staph-
13 ylococcus aureus.

14 “(3) TRANSACTING OR PROCESSING.—A cov-
15 ered entity shall not—

16 “(A) buy or sell a nonambulatory pig;

17 “(B) process, butcher, or sell meat or meat
18 food products of a nonambulatory pig; or

19 “(C) slaughter any nonambulatory pig or
20 prepare any carcass or part of a carcass, or
21 meat or meat food product, from any non-
22 ambulatory pig.

23 “(4) RECORDS.—The Administrator of the
24 Food Safety and Inspection Service shall maintain

1 all documents submitted by covered entities pursuant
2 to the regulations under paragraph (1).

3 “(b) WILLFUL ACTS OF ABUSE.—The Secretary
4 shall promulgate regulations prohibiting a covered individual from committing any willful act of abuse—

5 “(1) against nonambulatory pigs; or

6 “(2) that may reasonably be expected to result
7 in injury or illness of ambulatory pigs.

8 “(c) INJURED AND DISEASED PIGS.—

9 “(1) INJURED PIGS.—The Secretary shall promulgate regulations specifying the proper handling of injured pigs by a covered entity, including requirements to—

10 “(A) immediately treat or humanely euthanize pigs diagnosed as lame; and

11 “(B) immediately humanely euthanize—

12 “(i) pigs with—

13 “(I) uterine prolapses; or

14 “(II) any type of prolapse that is not addressed and becomes necrotic;

15 “(ii) pigs with—

16 “(I) perforated hernias;

17 “(II) hernias that are ulcerated and necrotic; or

1 “(III) large hernias that touch
2 the ground while standing and are ul-
3 cerated; and

4 “(iii) pigs that are unlikely to recover
5 from any other type of injury, even with
6 treatment.

7 “(2) DISEASED PIGS.—The Secretary shall pro-
8 mulgate regulations specifying the proper handling
9 of diseased pigs by a covered entity, including re-
10 quirements to immediately humanely euthanize pigs
11 that are not responding to care or are unlikely to re-
12 cover from disease or illness.

13 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

14 “(1) COVERED ENTITY.—The term ‘covered en-
15 tity’ means—

16 “(A) a stockyard;

17 “(B) a market agency;

18 “(C) a packer (as defined in section 201 of
19 the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7
20 U.S.C. 191));

21 “(D) a dealer (as defined in section 301 of
22 the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921 (7
23 U.S.C. 201));

24 “(E) a slaughter facility; and

25 “(F) an establishment.

1 “(2) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term ‘cov-
2 ered individual’ means any employee, former em-
3 ployee, contractor, or other person who has worked
4 or is currently working for or with a covered entity.

5 “(3) DISEASED.—The term ‘diseased’ means a
6 state of being—

7 “(A) that deviates from the normal struc-
8 tural or functional state of an animal;

9 “(B) in which the animal is impaired or
10 exhibits signs or symptoms of pain or suffering;
11 and

12 “(C) that is not caused by physical injury.

13 “(4) ESTABLISHMENT.—The term ‘establish-
14 ment’ means an establishment that is subject to in-
15 spection pursuant to the Federal Meat Inspection
16 Act (21 U.S.C. 601 et seq.).

17 “(5) HUMANELY EUTHANIZE.—The term ‘hu-
18 manely euthanize’ means, with respect to a pig, to
19 immediately render the pig unconscious by mechani-
20 cal, chemical, or other means, with the unconscious
21 state remaining until the death of the pig.

22 “(6) INJURED.—The term ‘injured’ means a
23 state of being in which an animal’s body is phys-
24 ically harmed or damaged.

1 “(7) NONAMBULATORY PIG.—The term ‘non-
2 ambulatory pig’ means any swine that cannot stand
3 or walk unassisted.

4 “(8) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means
5 the Secretary of Agriculture.

6 “(9) WILLFUL ACTS OF ABUSE.—The term
7 ‘willful acts of abuse’ means, with respect to pigs,
8 any acts that intentionally cause pain or suffering to
9 the pigs, including—

10 “(A) hitting or beating the pigs, such as
11 with a fist, foot, or any hard objects that can
12 cause pain or injury;

13 “(B) purposefully slamming, dropping,
14 throwing, or dragging the pigs by any body
15 part, except in the case of moving non-
16 ambulatory pigs using a drag mat;

17 “(C) excessive use of electric prods, includ-
18 ing—

19 “(i) prodding the pigs in sensitive
20 areas, such as the face, genitals, or rec-
21 tum;

22 “(ii) providing a shock that lasts
23 longer than one second; and

24 “(iii) using electric prods other than
25 as a last resort;

1 “(D) failure to provide food, water, and
2 care to the pigs in a manner that could result
3 in significant harm or death to the pigs; and

4 “(E) driving the pigs on top of one an-
5 other, including with the use of motorized vehi-
6 cles.”.

7 (b) INSPECTION OF NONAMBULATORY PIGS; LABEL-
8 ING.—Section 6 of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21
9 U.S.C. 606) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
10 lowing:

11 “(c) INSPECTION OF NONAMBULATORY PIGS; LABEL-
12 ING.—

13 “(1) INSPECTION.—It shall be unlawful for an
14 inspector at an establishment subject to inspection
15 under this Act to pass through inspection any non-
16 ambulatory pig or carcass (including parts of a car-
17 cass) of a nonambulatory pig.

18 “(2) LABELING.—An inspector or other em-
19 ployee of an establishment described in paragraph
20 (2) shall label, mark, stamp, or tag as ‘inspected
21 and condemned’ any carcass (including parts of a
22 carcass) of a nonambulatory pig.

23 “(3) NONAMBULATORY PIG DEFINED.—In this
24 subsection, the term ‘nonambulatory pig’ means any
25 swine that cannot stand or walk unassisted.”.

1 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
3 graph (2), the amendments made by subsections (a)
4 and (b) shall take effect on the date that is 1 year
5 after the date of enactment of this Act.

6 (2) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after
7 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
8 shall promulgate final regulations to implement the
9 amendments made by subsections (a) and (b).

10 **SEC. 104. OSHA STANDARD AND STAFFING REQUIREMENT.**

11 (a) PROPOSED STANDARD.—Not later than 1 year
12 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
13 Labor shall, pursuant to section 6 of the Occupational
14 Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 655), promul-
15 gate a proposed standard for handling nonambulatory
16 pigs. Such proposed standard shall include requirements
17 for—

18 (1) employee training related to handling such
19 pigs; and
20 (2) the use of mechanical lifting aids.

21 (b) FINAL STANDARD.—Not later than 2 years after
22 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor
23 shall, pursuant to section 6 of the Occupational Safety and
24 Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 655), promulgate a final
25 standard that shall be—

1 (1) based on the proposed standard under para-
2 graph (1); and

3 (2) effective and enforceable in the same man-
4 ner and to the same extent as any standard promul-
5 gated under section 6(b) of such Act (29 U.S.C.
6 655(b)).

7 (c) STAFFING REQUIREMENT.—A covered entity
8 shall take such steps as may be necessary, including hiring
9 and training additional employees, to comply with the re-
10 quirements of this Act, the amendments made by this Act,
11 and the final standard promulgated pursuant to sub-
12 section (b).

13 **TITLE II—PUBLIC HEALTH
14 TRANSPARENCY**

15 **SEC. 201. ONLINE PORTAL FOR CONFIDENTIAL COM-
16 PLAINTS.**

17 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after
18 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
19 Agriculture, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor,
20 shall establish and make publicly available on the website
21 of the Department of Agriculture an online portal,
22 through which individuals may submit confidential com-
23 plaints regarding alleged or potential violations by a cov-
24 ered entity of—

1 (1) this Act, or the amendments made by this
2 Act, including—

3 (A) section 10409B of the Animal Health
4 Protection Act (as inserted by section 101);

5 (B) section 13A of the Animal Welfare Act
6 (as inserted by section 102);

7 (C) section 7 of Public Law 85–765 (com-
8 monly known as the “Humane Methods of
9 Slaughter Act of 1958”) (as added by section
10 103(a)); and

11 (D) section 6(c) of the Federal Meat In-
12 spection Act (as added by section 103(b));

13 (2) the Occupational Safety and Health Act of
14 1970 (29 U.S.C. 651 et seq.); or

15 (3) the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29
16 U.S.C. 201 et seq.).

17 (b) PUBLIC NOTICE.—Upon the establishment of the
18 online portal described in subsection (a), the Secretary
19 shall issue a public notice informing individuals of—

20 (1) their right to use such portal; and

21 (2) the confidentiality protections provided by
22 the Department of Agriculture and the Department
23 of Justice to individuals who submit complaints
24 through such portal, which shall include—

(ii)(I) the release of such information
is otherwise required by law; and

(c) ANNUAL REPORTS ON AGGREGATE DATA.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall make publicly available a report describing the aggregate data collected from the online portal described in subsection (a).

22 SEC. 202. WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION.

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—A covered entity shall not dis-
24 charge, demote, suspend, threaten, harass, or in any other

1 manner discriminate against a covered individual because
2 of any lawful act done by the covered individual—

3 (1) to provide information, cause information to
4 be provided, or otherwise assist in an investigation
5 regarding any conduct that the covered individual
6 reasonably believes is illegal or constitutes a viola-
7 tion of this Act or the amendments made by this
8 Act;

9 (2) to file, cause to be filed, testify, participate
10 in, or otherwise assist in a proceeding or action filed,
11 or about to be filed, relating to a violation of any
12 law, rule, or regulation; or

13 (3) to refuse to violate, or assist in the violation
14 of, any law, rule, or regulation.

15 (b) ENFORCEMENT ACTION.—

16 (1) COMPLAINT.—

17 (A) IN GENERAL.—A covered individual
18 who alleges discharge or other discrimination by
19 any person in violation of paragraph (1) may
20 seek relief by filing a complaint with the Office
21 of the Inspector General of the Department of
22 Agriculture, which shall investigate the con-
23 cerns raised by the covered individual that al-
24 legedly caused retaliation.

1 (B) **LEGAL ACTION.**—If the Office of the
2 Inspector General has not issued a final deci-
3 sion regarding the investigation by the date
4 that is 210 days after the date on which the
5 complaint is filed, and there is no showing that
6 the delay is due to the bad faith of the claim-
7 ant, the claimant may bring an action at law or
8 equity for de novo review in the appropriate dis-
9 trict court of the United States, which shall
10 have jurisdiction over such an action without
11 regard to the amount in controversy.

12 (2) **PROCEDURE.**—A complaint under para-
13 graph (1)(A) shall be governed under the rules and
14 procedures established in section 1013 of the Fed-
15 eral Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C.
16 399d) and shall be resolved within 21 days after the
17 date on which such complaint is filed.

18 (3) **REMEDIES.**—A covered individual who pre-
19 vails in any action under subparagraph (A) shall be
20 entitled to remedies equivalent to relief provided
21 under section 1013(b)(4)(B) of the Federal Food,
22 Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 399d(b)(4)(B)).

23 (c) **RIGHTS RETAINED BY THE INDIVIDUAL.**—

24 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Nothing in this subsection
25 diminishes the rights, privileges, or remedies of any

1 individual under any Federal or State law, or under
2 any collective bargaining agreement.

3 (2) WAIVER OF RIGHTS AND REMEDIES.—The
4 rights and remedies provided for in this section may
5 not be waived by any agreement, policy form, or con-
6 dition of employment, including by a predispute ar-
7 bitration agreement.

8 (3) PREDISPUTE ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS.—
9 No predispute arbitration agreement shall be valid
10 or enforceable, to the extent the agreement requires
11 arbitration of a dispute arising under this section.

12 **SEC. 203. STUDY AND REPORT ON THREAT OF NON-**
13 **AMBULATORY PIGS IN FOOD SYSTEM.**

14 (a) STUDY.—The Under Secretary of Agriculture for
15 Food Safety shall, in coordination with the Director of the
16 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, conduct a
17 study regarding the public health threat of nonambulatory
18 pigs entering the food system.

19 (b) REPORT.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after
21 the date of enactment of this Act, the Under Sec-
22 retary shall submit to Congress, and make publicly
23 available, a report describing the results of the study
24 conducted under subsection (a).

1 (2) CONTENTS.—Such report shall include, at a
2 minimum, descriptions of the impact on the public
3 health of pathogens associated with nonambulatory
4 pigs, including—
5 (A) swine influenza viruses H1N1 and
6 H3N2;
7 (B) *Salmonella*;
8 (C) *Yersinia enterocolitica*;
9 (D) *Campylobacter*; and
10 (E) Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus*
11 aureus.

