



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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Dear Honorable Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee Members:

Thank you for holding a hearing to discuss a possible solution to the fireworks debacle. In response to many complaints about the negative impact's fireworks have on animals and unintended consequences on shelters, the HSUS supports efforts aimed to adjust the law considering the detrimental effects that explosive fireworks have on service animals, companion animals and wildlife. Loud blasts and other piercing noises from fireworks cause a great amount of stress, confusion, and fear in animals. You can imagine the anxiety individuals who depend upon service animals feel if their "lifeline" to activities of daily living becomes disoriented. The perceived threat renders panicked behavior which drives pets and wild animals to flee.

There is a link in missing pets directly attributable to fireworks. Pet owners are responsible for ensuring their animals are both confined within their property and in the case of dogs licensed with the state and wearing tags. However, when an animal feels threatened, they can become extremely motivated to escape and will often take any extraordinary opportunities to do so such as digging under and climbing over fences or breaking through gates, screens, and doors.

When successful, they become at risk of never being found, hit by a vehicle, or causing unintended damage. If they are picked up by local animal control or dog wardens, they become an additional burden to already overcrowded animal shelters and understaffed government employees. Even when pets don't escape the home, fear induced by fireworks can cause animals to become aggressive, harm themselves, eliminate inappropriately, vomit, or go into hiding. Pet guardians do have options to comfort their pets during fireworks shows such as thunder jackets and medication and can plan for predictable events like a 4th of July or New Year's Eve celebrations,



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however, since Pennsylvania allows for consumer fireworks to be purchased and discharged any time of year, it leaves many pet owners uneasy about when the next loud boom will happen.

There have been incidents since the 2017 fireworks law was enacted. The second article (link below) includes various testimonies on how fireworks traumatize horses and other pets in counties across PA. Please consider the risk to wildlife caused by the same. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, birds particularly suffer from disorientation and environmental impacts. We appreciate efforts by the Committee to minimize the unintended consequences that fireworks displays have on pets, their guardians, animal control officers/dog wardens as well as non-profit shelters.

For the Animals,

Kristen Tullo and Heidi Prescott of the HSUS, and Senator Roy Afflerbach, Ret.

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¹ https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/fourth-of-july-animal-shelters-busy-pet-safety_us_5956a9d6e4b0da2c732379a6

² [A 2017 fireworks law has horse and dog owners among those traumatized \(thehorseofdelawarevalley.com\)](http://thehorseofdelawarevalley.com)