

Testimony on Theodore Roosevelt National Park (2025)

Regarding: SCR 4006

Dear Senate Committee, my name is Karen Mertes and I'm a resident of Illinois. Per this testimony, I am asking you to vote 'Do Pass' on Resolution SCR 4006 to enact Federal protection for the Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) herd of wild horses. Since these horses are not protected under The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act¹, this resolution is extremely important to the survival and freedom of these horses that have lived on TRNP land all their lives, and to the continuation of a viable herd without the threat of removal.

As someone who loves visiting the park, the presence of the wild horses is a significant draw and adds to the overall appeal of TRNP. Scientific studies show that horses play a major role in maintaining the park's fragile ecosystem by re-seeding as they forage over the entire park, eat plants that cause wildfires, and contribute to its wilderness character.

By preserving these wild horses, we not only protect a living symbol of American Heritage but also ensure that future generations can experience the wonder and beauty of seeing these magnificent animals roaming freely in their natural habitat.

Again, I sincerely ask that you vote in favor of this resolution. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Karen Mertes

Dated this 1st day of February, 2025

¹ The Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195)

§1331. Congressional findings and declaration of policy

Congress finds and declares that wild free-roaming horses and burros are living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West; that they contribute to the diversity of life forms within the Nation and enrich the lives of the American people; and that these horses and burros are fast disappearing from the American scene. It is the policy of Congress that wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death; and to accomplish this they are to be considered in the area where presently found, as an integral part of the natural system of the public lands.