

U.S. House Hearings Convene to Address Drum Beat of Racehorse Deaths Throughout the United States

Horseracing Integrity Act and Safeguard American Food Exports Act Address Closely Related Concerns

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, January 28, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, the U.S. House initiated the first of two hearings this week to address two long-standing animal welfare problems: race-day doping of horses thrust into competition and the slaughter of American horses for overseas markets for human consumption.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce's

hearing entitled, "Legislation to Promote the Health and Safety of Racehorses" has just convened in room 2322 of the Rayburn House Office Building on H.R. 1754, the "Horseracing Integrity Act" led by U.S. Reps. Paul Tonko (D-NY) and Andy Barr (R-KY).



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Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action

Witnesses include Animal Wellness Action's executive director, Marty Irby, testifying in support of the measure. The Senate companion, S. 1820, was introduced by U.S. Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Martha McSally (R-AZ) in June of last year.

“The public sentiment is very rapidly shifting from a desire to end doping to concerns about the very existence of the sport itself,” said Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action. “If Congress fails to pass the Horseracing

Integrity Act, and obstructionists within the industry continue to hinder the legislation, then those who demand horseracing be brought to an end will prevail.”

“As Chair of the House Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, I look forward to consulting with experts on this important bill,” said Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL). “Horseracing is a sport with a long history, but it's past time we work to protect these amazing equine athletes and jockeys. The fact that so many horses continue to die on the racetrack from avoidable causes is inexcusable. This bill would provide much needed uniform regulations across the country to protect horse, rider, and the sport itself.”

“After years working side by side with my friend Congressman Andy Barr to move this legislation forward, I am deeply gratified that our bill to strengthen America's horseracing industry and

elevate the health and safety of our equine athletes is finally getting its due support," said Congressman Paul Tonko (D-NY). "Establishing a single, national approach to medication testing with strong independent oversight and enforcement will help ensure the long-term viability of this sport of kings. The stakes for this legislation are high, especially in regions like ours with historic ties to an industry that contributes billions of dollars and supports thousands of jobs in the New York economy each year, much of it at and around our legendary Saratoga Race Course."

"This hearing is an important step in furthering the conversation around the need for transparency and standardization in horseracing," said Congressman Andy Barr (R-KY). "I look forward to a robust discussion with Members of the Energy and Commerce Committee and equine industry experts on how to ensure the integrity and safety of the sport. As the Representative of the Horse Capital of the World, I will continue to fight for the future of horseracing and build on this momentum to bring this vital legislation to the House floor for a vote."

"Our modern-day society will not tolerate abuse or horse deaths for the purposes of entertainment – this isn't ancient Rome, it's 2020. There is no aspect of horseracing that should be more important than the protection of the horse," continued Irby.

Today horseracing operates under a balkanized patchwork of rules that creates confusion and risk and contains gaps in enforcement. H.R. 1754 would greatly improve regulatory standards, ban the use of all medications on race day, and level the playing field for everyone invested in horse racing.

The bill designates the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency as the independent organization that would oversee and administer all drug testing in U.S. horseracing. Delegating the authority for testing, oversight, and rulemaking to USADA is the cornerstone of this landmark legislation and a provision that is the most critical component for



Animal Wellness Action Executive Director Marty Irby



Hall of Fame Jockey Chris McCarron with Animal Wellness Action Executive Director Marty Irby in Saratoga Springs on Saturday Discussing Horse Protection Issues

the protection of racehorses along with the legislation's specific ban on the use of race-day medication.

H.R. 1754 would provide USADA with the ability to impose penalties for cheating that apply nationwide: a lifetime ban for the most severe types of doping, and a range of penalties for other serious medication violations.

This week U.S. House Energy and

Commerce's Subcommittee on Health will hear testimony on the Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act, H.R. 961, led by Reps. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), and Vern Buchanan (R-FL) that would end the slaughter of American equines for human consumption.

[Click here for Animal Wellness Action's official testimony on H.R. 1754.](#)

[Click here for the live feed of the Subcommittee's hearing on H.R. 1754.](#)

[Click here for Animal Wellness Action's landing](#) page on the Horseracing Integrity Act to see what other Members of Congress are saying about the bill.

Marty Irby

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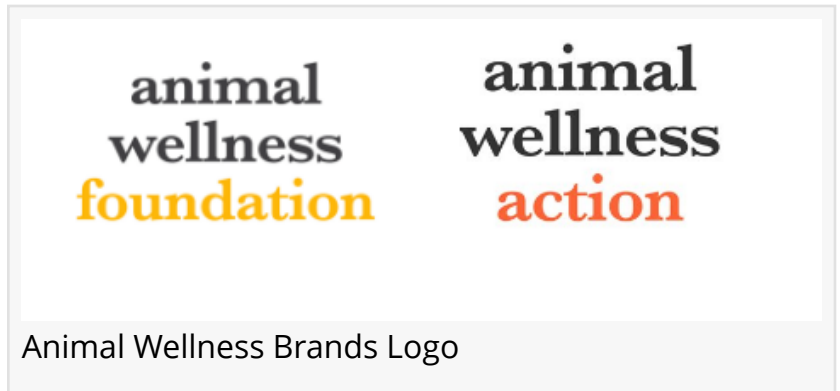
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