

Native Mobilian Marty Irby Testifies Before U.S. House to End Rampant Doping of American Racehorses

MOBILE, ALABAMA, USA, January 29, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The U.S. House of Representatives convened hearings this week to address long-standing animal welfare problems including the rampant race-day doping of horses thrust into competition that has led to dozens of horse deaths this month, including a spate at the New Orleans Fair Grounds and Racecourse.

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" convened yesterday to

hear H.R. 1754, the "Horseracing Integrity Act" led by U.S. Reps. Paul Tonko (D-NY) and Andy Barr (R-KY). U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-AL) was an early cosponsor of the 230 Members in the House who support the legislation, and also supported the bill in the 115th Congress as well.



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*Marty Irby, executive director
at Animal Wellness Action*

Witnesses testifying in support of the measure included native Mobilian, [Marty Irby](#), executive director at Animal Wellness Action, and a former 8-time World Champion equestrian rider who resides in Washington D.C.; and Chris McCarron, retired racing Hall of Fame jockey who won The Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes, and Belmont Stakes each twice.

Irby was recognized by President Donald J. Trump at the White House signing of the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act in November and named one of the Top Lobbyists of 2019 in December by The Hill for his work in protecting animals.

“The public sentiment is very rapidly shifting from a desire to end doping to concerns about the very existence of the sport itself,” Irby testified. “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.”

“There are far too many horses becoming injured,” McCarron testified. “Instead of giving the animal the rest it needs, a trainer can rely on his/her veterinarian to administer a medication to mask pain by reducing inflammation caused by an injury.” He added, “This bill directly addresses

one of the leading causes of breakdowns.”

“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.

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, but neither U.S. Senators Richard Shelby (R-AL), nor Doug Jones (D-AL) have joined in supporting the measure as a cosponsor.

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



Animal Wellness Action Executive Director Marty Irby



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

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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.

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

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

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Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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Marty Irby and President Donald Trump at the signing of the PACT Act in November



Marty Irby and Richie Sambora at The Breeders' Cup in 2017 at Del Mar

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