

Marty Irby: Monty Roberts Joins Up to Help Pass Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act Today

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, September 29, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- “For centuries, humans have said to horses, ‘You do what I tell you or I’ll hurt you.’ Humans still say that to each other — still threaten, force and intimidate. I’m convinced that my discoveries with horses have value in the workplace, in the educational and penal systems, and in the raising of children. At heart, I’m saying that no one else has the right to say, ‘you must’ to an animal — or to another human.”



Monty Roberts | Photo Credit: Monty Roberts, Shutterstock, and Craig Swanson Design

— Monty Roberts, ‘The Man Who Listens to Horses,’ a man who is our featured guest on today’s edition of The Animal Wellness Podcast.

I first met Monty Roberts and his wonderful daughter Debbie Loucks in 2005. I was working as the Director of Sales and Marketing at Waterfall Farms in Shelbyville, Tennessee, my first job out of college, and the largest and most successful walking horse breeding farm that existed. Monty went out on a limb to join us and teach us how to JoinUp® utilizing his violence-free methods to help horses and improve training methods.

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Monty Roberts, The Man Who Listens to Horses

My encounter with Monty and Debbie was the first time the curtain had been pulled back to reveal true methods of

horse training utilizing non-violent horsemanship, and a very real ability to communicate with horses that Monty had learned early in life watching wild horses on the range. It was quite fascinating and a key turning point in my life, and Monty’s been a tremendous influence ever since. He’s helped fuel my passion to do more for the horses, and ‘leave the world a better place for horses and for people.’

It's in great part because of Monty that nearly six years ago I decided to make ending doping and the use of the whip two major priorities in my professional life.

When we first started working to pass federal anti-doping legislation in the 114th Congress, H.R. 3084 had only mustered 21 cosponsors in the U.S. House, and no Senate companion. Later that year, a mock hearing was held by the Congressional Horse Caucus that brought light to the issue, and we made some progress. By the close of 2016 we'd made great strides – the major players in American horseracing were starting to pay attention to legislation gathering momentum in Congress.

In the 115th Congress we made changes to the legislation to expand on eliminating doping and bring more horse groups into the fold. A full Congressional hearing was held before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on H.R. 2651, the Horseracing Integrity Act that ultimately garnered 131 cosponsors. But the hearing didn't play out as stellar as we had planned, and still, without a Senate companion measure, the bill died in Committee at the end of 2018.

By early 2019, Animal Wellness Action committed to making H.R. 1754, now the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act, one of its top priorities for the 116th Congress. Working with the industry's leader of reform efforts, The Jockey Club, the Thoroughbred breed registry established in 1894, we believed the timing was



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

ripe, and the measure could cross the finish line, and permanently ban doping in the sport. I testified in support of the bill before the House Committee hearing held in January of this year alongside Hall of Fame jockey, Chris McCarron, and others. The hearing was lopsided in our favor, and after U.S. Rep. Buddy Carter – a pharmacist from Georgia – obliterated a veterinarian who was testifying against the measure, we gained some tremendous momentum. Just six weeks later the U.S. Dept. of Justice indicted 37 trainers and veterinarians caught illegally importing drugs to juice up horses, and the momentum continued.

Now with 260 cosponsors in the House, this landmark measure is backed by a broad base of industry players, including the businesses that run The Kentucky Derby; The Preakness; and The Belmont Stakes. The bill has long been led by U.S. Reps. Paul Tonko, D-N.Y., and Andy Barr, R-Ky., and is also supported by Animal Wellness Action and every major animal protection group in the nation.

Horse racing operates under an outdated, state-based, balkanized patchwork of medication rules that creates confusion and risk for owners and trainers and contains gaps in rules and enforcement. The Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act 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.

It would designate the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), a private non-governmental agency, as the independent organization that would oversee and administer all drug testing in U.S. horseracing. H.R. 1754 would also require racing authorities and racetracks to report all horse deaths and injuries to the Federal Trade Commission to be displayed in a public Federal database. It's newly introduced companion bill in the Senate, S. 4547, led by U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., Martha McSally, R-Ariz., and



Yearlings at Stone Farm in Paris, Kentucky | Photo Credit: Marty Irby

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Diane Feinstein, D-Calif. mirrors the House bill that's set for a vote on the House floor this evening.

In today's podcast Monty Roberts joins me, host Joseph Grove, and Wayne Pacelle in discussing the legislation in detail as well as our thoughts on eliminating whipping on a global scale – it's a fascinating tale that digs deep into Monty's work in 41 countries around the globe. Please tune in and [listen here today](#) and contact your House Members by [clicking here](#) and asking them to VOTE YES tonight in support of H.R. 1754.

[Marty Irby](#) is the executive director at Animal Wellness Action in Washington, D.C., former 8-time world champion equestrian, and a lifelong horseman who was recently honored by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, II for his work to protect horses.

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