

Racehorses Continue Dropping Like Flies at Charles Town, 9 Dead in 2021

CHARLES TOWN, WEST VIRGINIA , UNITED STATES, April 1, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Animal Wellness Action (AWA), the Animal Wellness Foundation (AWF), and the Center for a Humane Economy (CHE) are calling on Penn National Gaming to make substantial safety, health, and welfare changes at its Hollywood Casino Charles Town Race Course in West Virginia with nine horses now dead in 2021. The most recent death occurred on March 24th when “Wiggle It Jiggle It” “suffered a fatal injury...and had to be euthanized on the track,” according to the horse racing industry’s Equibase data. The death follows an investigative report by WDVM and a subsequent story by the Journal-News released hours earlier.



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“

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Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action

This year, there have been eight additional on-track deaths of horses at the facility: “Lanesborough” and “Nicaloe” were each reported to have “suffered fatal injury” and were “euthanized on track” on February 27th, and the same with “Uncle Funky” on March the 10th. Other deaths at Charles Town this year include “Best Shot,” “Venetian Drive,” “Don’tmesswithbull,” “Mio’s Long Term,” and “Paul’s Plunder.” The Associated Press covered the first of these deaths in February.

The Charles Town track has also been widely criticized in the past for shuttling poor-performing horses right from the track to kill buyers, who then ship horses to slaughter in Canada or Mexico for export to Belgium, Italy, and Japan for human consumption. Track officials notified the public that live racing has been cancelled for this weekend due to a “shortage of entries” at the venue according to a press release sent out yesterday.

“Penn National Gaming and officials at the Charles Town Race Course are overseeing a track that has turned into a crash site,” said [Marty Irby](#), executive director at Animal Wellness Action who [testified](#) before Congress in 2020 in support of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act. “It’s shameful to see a publicly-traded company continue to allow these deaths to occur for the sake of a two-dollar-bet and big corporate profits. The management should rehaul its safety protocols and do so immediately.”

Animal Wellness Action has also called on Penn National Gaming to ban the use of the whip.

Irby, who was recently honored by Her Majesty, [Queen Elizabeth](#), II for his work to protect American equines led the charge within the animal protection space in support of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act (HISA) that was signed into law on December 27, 2020. The measure was championed by U.S. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and U.S. Reps. Paul Tonko, D-N.Y., and Andy Barr, R-Ky., and bans race-day doping in U.S. horse racing and creates

a uniform national standard for drug testing overseen by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) that will take effect mid-2022. The Jockey Club, the New York-based breed registry for Thoroughbreds, The Breeders’ Cup, New York Racing Association, Keeneland, Water, Hay, Oats Alliance, and others were also instrumental in working for the passage of the anti-doping legislation, but Penn National Gaming was not active in supporting the anti-doping legislation.

Irby both at AWA and CHE, and in previous roles has long advocated ending the use of the whip, and for the passage of anti-horse-slaughter legislation led by U.S. Reps. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., and U.S. Sens. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. that



Entrance sign at the Hollywood Casino Charles Town Races complex | Photo credit: George Sheldon (Shutterstock Royalty-free stock photo ID: 1640257198)



Charles Town Race Course operated by Penn National Gaming | Photo Credit: Animal Wellness Action

would ban horse slaughter on U.S. soil, and ban the transport of American equines for the purposes of slaughter.

Animal Wellness Action (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.

The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Center for a Humane Economy ("the Center") is a non-profit organization that focuses on influencing the conduct of corporations to forge a humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key



AWA executive director Marty Irby testifying at a House hearing on H.R. 1754 in January 2020



Animal Wellness Action Executive Director Marty Irby

stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both.

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