

Bob Baffert's Kentucky Derby Winner Media Spirit Drops Dead at Santa Anita Park Following Workout

Embattled 3-year-old Colt 's Death Highlights the Need for Reform, Implementation of Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, as the news of embattled 2021 Kentucky Derby winner [Medina Spirit](#)'s untimely death unfolds, Animal Wellness Action executive director [Marty Irby](#) issued the following statement:



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“Condolences to the owners and fans of Medina Spirit after his untimely death. This high-performing 3-year-old colt will always have an asterisk by his name because of medication abuses that caused extreme controversy following the horse's Derby win, and connection to the controversial trainer Bob Baffert. Doping and medication abuse has no place in American horse racing, and we have to wonder if the use of drugs contributes not only to on-track injuries and deaths but also to post-track health risks.

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Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action

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Animal Wellness Action led the charge on the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act (HISA) in the animal protection space working with coalition partners such as The Jockey Club, NYRA, The Breeders’ Cup, Water, Hay, Oats Alliance, and Stronach Group, and Irby testified before Congress at the 2020 hearing on the legislation. The measure was signed into law in December of 2020 by President Donald Trump and bans the use of race-

day medication while also creating a uniform national standard for drug testing and regulation overseen by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA). The new law takes effect mid-2022, and new HISA regulations were recently released for public comment.

Medina Spirit's Derby win has been ridden with scandal by positive tests for illegal levels of drugs in the horse's system, and as a result, the horse was not allowed to compete in the Belmont Stakes, the third and final leg of the Triple Crown in Thoroughbred horse racing. Irby's opinion work published by [NBC News](#) following the 2021 Kentucky Derby can be found here.



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

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.

Santa Anita Park

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