

# Statement on HISA Announcement to Contract with Drug Free Sport International, not U.S. Anti-Doping Agency

*Decision flies in face of key forces behind anti-doping legislation to protect horses.*

WASHINGTON, DC., USA, May 3, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, [Animal Wellness Action](#) and its affiliates reacted with skepticism after learning that the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority, established by the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act to implement and help enforce the legislation, said it will contract with Drug Free Sport International to execute drug testing in the sport.



USADA would have been the better choice to protect Thoroughbred champions like these.

Animal advocates had hoped the Authority would contract with the U.S. Anti-doping Agency to provide the testing. USADA's credibility is stellar. It is the agency whose testing of Lance Armstrong resulted in his banishment from competitive bicycling and the stripping of his Tour de France wins.

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*Marty Irby, executive director,  
Animal Wellness Action*

Animal Wellness Action executive director Marty Irby, who testified before Congress in support of the legislation in January of 2020, released the following statement in response:

“When discussions between the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority and the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency ended, the entity best equipped to conduct an anti-doping testing regiment was discarded. The DFS will have to go a long way to demonstrate rigor, testing ability, and independence to

do the work and to convince the American public that our national anti-doping law is being

enforced.

"It is our understanding that the cost of implementation was an issue for the Authority, but we believe when it comes to the welfare of the horse, no expense should be spared. In nearly a thousand meetings on Capitol Hill, animal protection advocates, horse racing industry supporters, and members of the Coalition for Horse Racing Integrity agreed and made it abundantly clear that USADA was the very bedrock and foundation of the legislation, and that we had confidence USADA was the agency that had the ability to permanently stamp out the rampant doping and cheating that occurs in the so-called 'Sport of Kings.'

"In fact, USADA was the only constant in nearly a half-a-dozen versions of the legislation, and we are very disappointed and deeply concerned that the end result is not what we sought to achieve. Today's announcement is a kick in the gut for those of us who worked so tirelessly for more than six years to enact the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act."

Aware of the public outrage over the mounting number of racehorse deaths on American racetracks, leaders at Animal Wellness Action worked for the better part of six years to secure enactment of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act. It was signed into law in December 2020 by President Trump following a Congressional hearing in January 2020 and the indictment of dozens of individuals involved in illegal doping scandals across the country.

The legislation, led by Reps. Paul Tonko, D-N.Y., and Andy Barr, R-Ky., in the U.S. House, and Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., as well as Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and Diane Feinstein, D-Calif., was designed to execute and enforce a uniform national standard for drug testing. It created national regulations that would be overseen by USADA and implemented at every Thoroughbred racetrack in the U.S.

The legislation established the new HISA board of directors, who have been in negotiations with USADA for most of 2021, but the HISA board had failed to secure an agreement with USADA to execute the intent of the legislation even before this announcement. USADA publicly announced on Dec. 23, 2021, that it was walking away from the negotiations due to what it described as insurmountable differences with HISA. The Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act specifically calls for implementation of the legislation by mid-2022 and a five-year-contract between the HISA board and USADA.

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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.

The [Center for a Humane Economy](#) 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 stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both.

The Animal Wellness 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.

Marty Irby

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