

Statement on the Running of the 148th Kentucky Derby

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, USA, May 6, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Leading up to the running of the 148th Kentucky Derby tomorrow at Churchill Downs, Animal Wellness Action executive director Marty Irby issued the following statement:

“We applaud Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby for taking positive steps to help bring integrity back to the Fastest Two Minutes in Sports. The absence of Lasix and other drugs, coupled with infamous trainer [Bob Baffert](#)’s suspension following a failed

drug test with Medina Spirit last year, and Churchill’s support of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act, puts the ‘Run for the Roses’ in a much better light than we’ve seen in recent years.



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If American horse racing and the Kentucky Derby are to maintain credibility as a legitimate sport and signature event, these types of reforms must continue...”

*Marty Irby, executive director
at Animal Wellness Action*

“If American horse racing and the Kentucky Derby are to maintain credibility as a legitimate sport and signature event, these types of reforms must continue, and bad actors like Baffert must be held accountable at every turn. We hope the 148th Kentucky Derby is the safest and soundest we’ve ever seen.”

Background:

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 (HISA). It was signed into law in December 2020 by President Donald J. Trump following a [Congressional hearing](#) in January 2020 where Irby testified, 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 will be overseen by a new national Authority and implemented at every Thoroughbred racetrack in the U.S.

The legislation established the new HISA board of directors. They were in negotiations with the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) for most of 2021, but the HISA board failed to secure an agreement with USADA to execute the intent of the legislation. 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, but in recent weeks, talks with USADA had resumed. However, this week the [HISA announced](#) their decision to partner with Drug Free Sport International instead of USADA much to animal welfare advocates' dismay.

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.



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



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

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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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