

Statement on Kentucky Derby Winner Rich Strike's Announcement Skipping Preakness Stakes

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA, May 12, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Following the [announcement](#) that 2022 Kentucky Derby winner Rich Strike will not be running in the 147th Preakness Stakes in Baltimore, Animal Wellness Action executive director Marty Irby issued the following statement:

"We applaud the Rich Strike team for putting the welfare of the horse first and choosing not to run in the 147th Preakness Stakes. Their decision to 'give him more recovery time and rest' is refreshing to see, and we have no doubt that Rich Strike will go down in the history books as one of the most famous American racehorses of all time."



Pimlico Racetrack, Home of the Preakness Stakes

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*Marty Irby, executive director
at Animal Wellness Action*

"In addition, we were elated to learn the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission saw the blood test results of both Rich Strike, and the Kentucky Oaks winner came back clean, free from any illegal drugs, and that's a tremendous step in the right direction. We hope to see a safe and drug free Preakness next week in Baltimore."

Click [here](#) to read Irby's opinion piece published by NBC News the morning of the Kentucky Derby.

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



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

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issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

Marty Irby

Animal Wellness Action

+1 202-821-5686

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