

# Animal Wellness Action Statement on the Running of the 154th Belmont Stakes in New York

ELMONT, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, June 10, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Leading up to the running of the New York Racing Association's (NYRA) 154th Belmont Stakes set for Saturday, Animal Wellness Action executive director Marty Irby issued the following statement:

"We are grateful for NYRA's continued work as a partner in the Coalition for Horse Racing Integrity and reiterate our applause for NYRA's decision to ban Bob Baffert from the race this year as well as their commitment to end doping in the sport. We wish all competitors and participants a safe and successful Belmont Stakes on Saturday.



Photo Credit: Shutterstock Photo ID: 12074095

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*Marty Irby, executive director  
at Animal Wellness Action*

"The owners of Kentucky Derby winner Rich Strike were wise to make the decision to 'give him more recovery time and rest' by skipping the Preakness, and we hope this attitude toward the welfare of horses becomes contagious throughout the horse racing industry."

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 Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority 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. The HISA recently announced their decision to instead partner with Drug Free Sport International leading up to the legislation's effective date next month.

[Click here to listen to](#) the latest episode of The Animal Wellness Podcast with Irby and Monty Roberts, the "Man Who Listens to Horses," recorded Monday, and here to listen to last month's episode with Hall of Fame jockey Chris McCarron.

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

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Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of



Hall of Fame Jockey Chris McCarron with Animal Wellness Action Executive Director Marty Irby in Saratga Springs on Saturday Discussing Horse Protection Issues



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



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.

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Marty Irby (center) and Monty Roberts (far right)

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