

Supreme Court Decision Upholds HISA Horse Safety Rules in Texas & Louisiana, Boosting Advocates While Case Is Weighed

A federal court split raises uncertainty, yet advocates remain hopeful for the law's future in protecting Thoroughbreds from racing abuses

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, October 29, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Animal Wellness Action expressed optimism now that the U.S. Supreme Court has reactivated enforcement of the Horseracing Safety and Integrity Act in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas — a law providing for a range of horse safety rules in Thoroughbred racing — and may take up case to permanently resolve legal questions raised by critics of the law who want no federal safety standards.



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The passage of the landmark law, which has been championed by Animal Wellness Action and other horse industry and animal welfare groups, was a major moment in establishing national horse safety and welfare standards for animals in competition. This legislation allows the federal government to regulate critical aspects of the sport by addressing long-standing issues such as drug abuse, injuries, and the overall well-being of Thoroughbreds.

The action by the high court reinstates enforcement of safety rules in a large portion of the Southeast. The Horseracing Safety Authority oversees the enforcement of guidelines intended to ensure fair competition and safeguard the welfare of the horses involved. But the enforcement provisions have met with mixed results in federal Appeals courts, with the Fifth Circuit saying they are unconstitutional. while a separate decision in the Sixth Circuit upheld them. More recently, the Eight Circuit joined with the Sixth in signaling that the provisions are legal and enforceable.

"I am heartened that the high court has reinstated full enforcement of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act (HISA) in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas," said Wayne Pacelle, president of



We expect, in the end, the high court will affirm that the national safety rules for horses in competition should remain intact and enforced in every Thoroughbred racing jurisdiction in the nation.”

*Wayne Pacelle, president of
Animal Wellness Action*

Animal Wellness Action and a major advocate for Congress passing HISA. “We expect, in the end, that the high court will affirm that the national safety rules for horses in competition should remain intact and enforced in every Thoroughbred racing jurisdiction in the nation.”

Supporters of the Act, including animal welfare advocates and industry stakeholders, view this decision as a crucial step toward restoring public confidence in horse racing. They argue that the previous lack of effective regulation has led to unethical practices that compromise the health and safety of racehorses and tarnish the sport’s reputation.

As this regulatory framework is rolled out, it is expected to encourage transparency and accountability within the industry, which has faced mounting criticism over ethical concerns. By establishing uniform standards aimed at protecting racehorses and enhancing the integrity of horse racing, the Supreme Court’s ruling represents a pivotal moment for the future of the sport in the United States.

Scott Edwards, general counsel of Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy, believes the Supreme Court will ultimately take up the Fifth Circuit case to resolve the current split among the federal appellate courts regarding the legality of HISA.

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