

January 27, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Janice Schakowsky
Chairwoman
Subcommittee Consumer Protection
& Commerce
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
Subcommittee Consumer Protection &
Commerce
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: The Homes for Horses Coalition Support for H.R. 1754/S. 1820, The Horseracing Integrity Act

Dear Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member Walden, Chairwoman Schakowsky and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers:

On behalf of the Homes for Horses Coalition (HHC) and our 526 equine rescue professional members nationwide, we are writing in support of H.R. 1754/S. 1820, the Horseracing Integrity Act. This bill would end the dangerous practice of using race-day medications in horses, create a uniform medication policy for all 38 racing jurisdictions in the United States, and substantially increase drug testing for racehorses.

Doping remains a serious problem in the horseracing industry. This is not surprising since the practice is still permitted by law. Abuses of both legal and illegal substances have contributed to increasing racehorse breakdowns and deadly accidents. A shocking statistic is that there are 1.61 fatal racing injuries per 1,000 starts at racetracks in the United States, according to the Jockey Club.

The Horseracing Integrity Act would charge the non-governmental U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) with the establishment of an independent anti-doping authority for horse races. This is the same agency that oversees drug testing at Olympic sports in the U.S. to emphasize clean competition.

The authority would develop a set of rules pertaining to horseracing that would govern prohibited substances and put forth guidelines for the use of permitted ones. The agency would also implement anti-doping education, testing and adjudication of alleged violations. Rules violators would risk exclusion from interstate horseracing; the worst offenders could potentially receive lifetime bans.

As equine rescue professionals, our members routinely rescue, rehabilitate and rehome retired racehorses; those who are lucky enough to make it through their racing career without a breakdown. However, for every retired racehorse who is lucky enough to find a second career, there are horses who breakdown on the track and do not get that chance.

We believe that the measures outlined in the Horseracing Integrity Act are essential to ending the rampant misuse of controlled substances and critical to protecting the health and welfare of racehorses. We strongly encourage your support for this commonsense animal protection bill.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of this key federal legislation, safeguarding the health and welfare of U.S. racing horses.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Jacobson

The Homes for Horses Coalition

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Gaithersburg, MD 20886

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About The Homes for Horses Coalition

The Homes for Horses Coalition is supported by the Animal Welfare Institute and The Humane Society of the United States' Jeannie and Jim Dodson Equine Protection Fund. It is dedicated to ending horse slaughter and other forms of equine abuse, while promoting growth, collaboration and professionalism in the equine rescue and protection community.