

TEAM VALOR
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January 24, 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
Chairman
Subcommittee on 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 on Consumer Protection
& Commerce
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

My name is Barry Irwin. For the last 51 years I have made my living as a member of the Thoroughbred racing industry. I began as a journalist, became an agent brokering bloodstock and for the last 33 years have operated a racing stable comprised of horses owned by fractional-interest syndicates.

Horses that I have owned and managed have won many of the biggest prizes in the world, including the Kentucky Derby, two Breeders' Cups and the \$10-million World Cup in Dubai, which offered the greatest amount of prize money in the world the year we won it.

Although for decades I have bought the majority of my racing stock in Europe for export to the United States, last year I began leaving my horses abroad.

This year I informed my racing partners that I would no longer bring horses from abroad to race in the U. S. I told them that Team Valor, my stable, was done racing in America and once all of the stateside stock had been depleted, they will not be replaced.

Why, you may wonder, would the most successful stable of its kind in the history of North American racing abandon racing on this side of the Atlantic?. It is not for a lack of success.

The answer is that after spending most of the last 51 years trying to bring transparency to racing in hopes of improving the integrity of the sport for every element of this industry, I have finally given up hope that things can be turned around.

In trade journal Op/Eds, lengthy pieces in general circulation publications, on television and radio programs I produced, I have devoted myself to improving the image of horse racing. I have pushed, pushed and pushed, both as an individual and as a member of the Water Hay Oats Alliance that has been in the forefront of demanding the legislation you are considering today.

My partners and I are sportsmen and women. We play the game out of a love of competition. But when the playing field is tilted because illegal performance enhancing drugs have begun to dominate competitive racing, we no longer want to be a part of it.

The main reason I have been able to promote racing partnerships is because my customers are hooked on the thrills that come from the pride of owning even a small piece of a top racehorse.

When horses are being taken advantage of by the indiscriminate and flagrant use of drugs, both legal and illegal, the battlefield of the turf is littered with the corpses of hopes, dreams and racehorses. We can no longer race in a country that refuses to put the horse first.

Will my horses ever return to race in the United States? That's the question all of my clients want answered. I can only say that for now, I see very little hope. The only improvement in the cards is if the Federal government passes legislation that enables the United States Anti-Doping Agency to oversee drugs in U. S. racing and if, once USADA is in charge, the cheaters and their enablers who have ruined the game for me are no longer part of the landscape.

That's a lot to ask for. But passing the legislation would certainly be a beginning.

Decades ago, in an opinion piece I wrote in the leading trade journal in our industry named The Blood-Horse, I first suggested that racing's leaders reach out to USADA, based on the success I had seen them experience in cleaning up Track and Field. Its dynamic leader Travis Tygart was for me a modern day Elliott Ness.

If any one individual or organization can stem the tide and turn this thing around it is Travis Tygart and USADA.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry Irwin". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Barry Irwin