



600 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
Suite 450
Washington, DC 20003

September 14, 2017

The Honorable Andy Barr
United States House of Representatives
1427 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko
United States House of Representatives
2463 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Barr and Tonko,

On behalf of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and our over 2.5 million supporters nationwide, I write in strong support of H.R. 2651, the **Horse Racing Integrity Act of 2017**. By establishing a national, independent authority to govern medications administered to racehorses, this legislation will promote the safety of our equine athletes and encourage consistent enforcement of doping regulations across state lines.

Racehorse doping is currently monitored by state racing commissions, whose regulations and consequences for violation often conflict. The resulting patchwork of regulations creates confusing, easily circumvented standards. H.R. 2651 would create an independent, non-governmental body funded by industry to establish, test for, and enforce racehorse doping standards. This Authority would include horse industry professionals and representatives from the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, which is responsible for governing other sports. The new standards would apply to Thoroughbreds, Quarter Horses, and Standardbreds, who collectively comprise the majority of racing starts in the U.S.

Notably, this legislation also would specifically prohibit the use of pain-relieving and performance-enhancing medications for 24 hours before a race. These medications often mask underlying health issues in horses, allowing them to over-exert and injure themselves. The U.S. has the highest rate of racehorse fatalities in the world – 1.61 per 1,000 starts for Thoroughbred racehorses alone in 2017. Prohibiting the use of these medications on race days would help to ensure that only healthy and fit racehorses could compete.

I appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you as this legislation moves forward. If we can assist you or your staff in any way, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Richard Patch
Vice President, Federal Affairs
Government Relations