

**Chairman Latta—Opening Statement,
“H.R. 2651, the Horseracing Integrity Act of 2017”
Subcommittee on Digital Commerce
and Consumer Protection
June 22, 2018**

Good morning and thank you to our distinguished panel for appearing before us today to discuss Representative Barr and Tonko’s legislation, H.R. 2651, the Horseracing Integrity Act of 2017.

This legislation establishes an independent non-profit authority, the Horseracing Anti-Doping and Medication Control Authority. This Authority would be tasked with developing and administering an anti-doping and medication control program for race horses and affiliated persons. The bill also aims to ban the use of medication 24 hours before a race— which advocates and opponents tell the committee would result in a ban on the use of Lasix— a widely used medication that is administered four hours prior to post time to treat exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhaging.

Horse racing has a long and distinguished history in the United States. Just a couple of weeks ago, on June 9th, millions of Americans watched as Justify, a thoroughbred racehorse, jockeyed by 52-year-old veteran Mike Smith, became the 13th winner of the Triple Crown. This was a historic accomplishment, celebrated across the globe.

It is also notable that horse racing is an international sport. Although the races of the Triple Crown are the world's most prestigious, other annual events in the United Kingdom, France, Australia, the United Arab Emirates and around the globe demonstrate the world-wide appeal of this ancient sport.

Here in the United States at least thirty-two States have horse racing tracks, stretching from California to Maine, including my home state of Ohio. These tracks provide the basis of an industry that has a far-reaching and significant impact on the U.S. economy.

Last year, approximately 51,000 horses competed in about 41,000 races competing for a total purse of more than \$1 billion. According to a recent study, the equine industry generates more than \$120 billion in total economic impact and provides a total employment impact of almost 1.8 million jobs. In my home state of Ohio, horse racing generates \$750 million in annual revenue and supports more than 16,000 jobs.

Horse racing is an important part of the American fabric, both as a sport and as a source of entertainment. Ensuring the integrity of the sport is important to owners, competitors and fans alike. I look forward to hearing the views of our witnesses today on the legislation.

Thank you and I yield back the balance of my time.