



June 27, 2017

Congressman Bob Latta
Chairman, Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection Subcommittee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

H.R. 2651 Opposition Coalition

Dear Congressman Latta:

The horseracing and breeding industry in the United States is a state-sanctioned and state-regulated business that has been a major source of jobs, revenue and open space for states and local communities for more than a century.

The undersigned organizations represent horse owners, trainers and breeders in all 34 horseracing jurisdictions in the United States governed by independent state regulatory bodies charged by state law with tightly regulating the business of racing for the protection of the health, welfare and safety of the horse and rider, the integrity of the sport, and the betting public. Our organizations represent tens of thousands of horsemen who collectively have the largest capital investment in the industry, employ tens of thousands of backstretch workers and support thousands of small businesses who play a vital support role in the industry.

We join with the Association of Racing Commissioners International (the national organization representing independent state racing commissions); the American Association of Equine Practitioners and North American Association of Racetrack Veterinarians (the principal organizations representing the equine veterinary community); the American Quarter Horse Association (the governing body of Quarter Horse racing in the United States); and numerous other racing and breeding organizations in strong and unified opposition to the recently proposed Horseracing Integrity Act of 2017 (H.R. 2651).

This bill is not in the best interests of the racing industry and is an ill-conceived effort by certain special interests to impose their minority views on the regulation of our industry. We have deep reservations about the provisions contained in this proposal because of its potential adverse impact on animal welfare and the economics of the industry.

H.R. 2651 purports to create a system for the uniform regulation and use of medication in the racing industry, but such a system already exists and it works well. Performance-enhancing drugs are not allowed or tolerated in horse racing. There is total uniformity on this issue IN EVERY RACING JURISDICTION, and racing has rules, policies, and laboratory testing that are superior to any sport or business in the world.

Each of the undersigned organizations and their constituent members have been involved for decades in working collectively to create and implement uniform policies to safeguard against doping and to protect the health, safety and welfare of the horse and the rider.

We strongly support the existing mechanism by which policies are formulated and embodied in the Model Rules of Racing established by the Association of Racing Commissioners International. These policies form the basis of the regulatory scheme currently in place, made after thoughtful deliberation and dialogue that includes input from an important array of organizations, including the Racing Medication and Testing Consortium that serves as the industry's scientific arm.

H.R. 2651 seeks to replace the current state regulatory system with one controlled by the federal government, with governance placed in the hands of hand-picked uninformed and unqualified individuals who know little to nothing about the racing industry or the health and welfare of the horse. The bill, which is most likely unconstitutional (a previous version was deemed to be such by the independent Congressional Research Service), will mire the industry in years of litigation, contains an unfunded mandate, deprives horsemen of current due process protections, and threatens the economic well-being of the industry and the best interests of the horse and rider.

Couched as an attempt at getting nationwide uniformity on the use and regulation of therapeutic medication in racing, it is actually nothing more than a smokescreen for the elimination of a safe, effective, necessary and tightly regulated medication (furosemide) that is given on race day to protect horses from bleeding in the respiratory tract. This has been a 30-year equine welfare policy to mitigate or prevent the effects of a condition recently elevated in severity by the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine.

The current industry policy, which endorses use of this medication because it is in the best interests of the health and welfare of the horse and the betting public until an alternate and effective therapy is developed, enjoys broad industry consensus and scientific support. The true purpose of H.R. 2651 is to do an end-run around the racing industry and its state regulators to impose by federal intervention the desire of a minority of special interests on an industry that collectively is, and has been, overwhelmingly opposed to their views. For the racing industry, it is all about the health, welfare and safety of the horse and rider and protection of the betting public.

Additionally H.R. 2651 would create a massive and completely unnecessary new level of federal bureaucracy on top of an existing state regulatory structure that has been in place for more than 100 years. We are especially alarmed by the provisions in H.R. 2651 that would allow this newly created federal bureaucracy to impose UNLIMITED NEW TAXES on our industry, particularly horse owners, without any checks or balances.

We strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 2651.

Sincerely:

**Thoroughbred Owners
of California**

**National Horsemen's Benevolent
and Protective Association**, including
the following affiliates:

- Alabama HBPA
- Arizona HBPA
- Arkansas HBPA
- Canadian National HBPA
- Charles Town (West Virginia) HBPA
- Colorado Horsemen's Association
- Finger Lakes (New York) HBPA
- Florida HBPA
- Indiana HBPA
- Iowa HBPA
- Illinois HBPA
- Kentucky HBPA
- Louisiana HBPA
- Michigan HBPA
- Minnesota HBPA
- Mountaineer (West Virginia) HBPA
- Nebraska HBPA
- New England HBPA
- Ohio HBPA
- Oregon HBPA
- Pennsylvania HBPA
- Tampa Bay Downs (Florida) HBPA
- Thoroughbred Racing Association
of Oklahoma
- Washington HBPA

**California Thoroughbred
Trainers Association**

Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association

and its affiliates:

- Delaware THA
- Illinois THA
- Maryland THA
- New Jersey THA
- New York THA
- Pennsylvania THA

Harness Horsemen International

and its affiliates:

- Cloverleaf (Maryland) SOA
- Delaware SOA
- HHA of New England
- Illinois HHA
- Indiana Standardbred Assn.
- Kentucky HHA
- Maine HHA
- Meadows (Pennsylvania) SOA
- Michigan HHA
- Minnesota Harness Racing
- Ohio HHA
- Ontario HHA
- Pennsylvania HHA
- SBOA of New Jersey
- Western New England HHA



AQHA OPPOSES THE NEWLY INTRODUCED VERSION OF THE HORSERACING INTEGRITY ACT OF 2017.

June 8, 2017

While AQHA strongly supports uniformity in the horse racing industry, it is unable to support the latest version of the newly introduced legislation.

On May 25, Congressman Andy Barr (R-KY) introduced the Horseracing Integrity Act of 2017 to the House of Representatives. In summary, the bill requires “a uniform anti-doping and medication control program to be developed and enforced by an independent Horseracing Anti-Doping and Medication Control Authority.”

While the American Quarter Horse Association strongly supports uniformity in the horse racing industry, it is unable to support the latest version of the newly introduced legislation.

“Of particular concern regarding this proposal is the elimination of all race-day medications, including Lasix, the use of which has been endorsed by several equine groups and the American Association of Equine Practitioners to help mitigate the occurrence of exercise induced pulmonary hemorrhage in racehorses,” said Craig Huffhines, AQHA executive vice president. “American Quarter Horse representation on the Authority and funding sources for the program are also among other areas of concern that we have regarding the legislation as currently proposed.”

AQHA is committed to the welfare of the racehorse and continues to work with international, national and state racing organizations and commissions to evaluate protocols to allow for uniform medication rules and deterrents of performance-enhancing drugs. In addition, the use of Lasix in AQHA shows is currently under review by the AQHA Animal Welfare Commission by request of the Executive Committee.

In recent months, AQHA worked with the Association of Racing Commissioners International to separate American Quarter Horse flat racing in its medication violation model rules to help eliminate the use of illegal performance-enhancing medications. The Association has also supported recent industry movements that include out-of-competition testing and hair testing.

For more information on American Quarter Horse racing, visit www.aqha.com/racing.



AAEP STATEMENT ON THE HORSERACING INTEGRITY ACT, H.R. 2651

Statement by American Association of Equine Practitioners 2017 President R. Reynolds Cowles, DVM:

“While the American Association of Equine Practitioners supports the uniformity of medication rules in U.S. horse racing, which is one of the chief goals of the Horseracing Integrity Act, our association opposes the newly introduced version of the legislation.

“The AAEP’s current policy on race-day medication administration endorses the use of furosemide to help mitigate the occurrence of exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage (EIPH) in the racehorse. This policy is based on the overwhelming body of international scientific and clinical evidence.

“H.R. 2651 seeks to end the administration of furosemide on race day, which conflicts with the AAEP’s long-held position. While we are optimistic that current research projects will yield an alternative treatment for EIPH which does not require race-day administration, as doctors of veterinary medicine we cannot abandon our current policy until science provides an efficacious option for protecting the health and welfare of the horse.

“The ability of USADA to regulate a sport which has far more participants than any sport they currently oversee remains a concern for the AAEP, but we are pleased with the change to the legislation’s proposed structure which allows for the inclusion of a veterinarian as part of the governing body. We also are pleased with the expansion of the bill’s language to clearly delineate the role of therapeutic medication and a formal anti-doping program.

“We appreciate the opportunity provided to us previously by Rep. Barr to offer input on the legislation in the areas of governance and veterinary involvement, although our suggestions were not incorporated into this version of the bill. The AAEP wishes to continue to serve as a resource to Rep. Barr and Rep. Tonko as issues affecting the health and the welfare of the racehorse are considered.”



OP/ED: YES, THE AAEP IS PROTECTING THE HORSE

by Jeff A. Blea, DVM & AAEP Racing Committee Chair

The American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP)'s recent decision to oppose the Horseracing Integrity Act of 2017 has been met with both support and criticism, depending on one's perspective within the industry. As chair of the AAEP Racing Committee, I'd like to address why we believe our position best represents the health and welfare of the racehorse.

First, I respect all the industry stakeholders who have invested an incredible amount of time and resources to ensure horse racing's sustainability. We have the same goals, I believe, even though we may differ on specific aspects of the proposed federal legislation.

The AAEP's decision to oppose the Horseracing Integrity Act was principally based on our long-standing policy in support of the race-day administration of furosemide to help mitigate the occurrence of exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage (EIPH). This policy is based on a vast body of scientific and clinical evidence and on what we, as equine veterinarians, believe is in the best interest of the health and welfare of the horse.

The scientific community recognizes that EIPH is a disease that affects equine athletes, in addition to human athletes (Diwakar, Amit, and Gregory A. Schmidt. "Exercise-Induced Pulmonary Hemorrhage in a Nonathlete: Case Report and Review of Physiology." *Lung* 192.2 (2014): 329-331). Currently, without debate, the only scientifically proven medication to ameliorate the effects of EIPH in the racehorse is furosemide (Lasix). It is in fact used in training in most countries around the world with few exceptions (personal communication).

In 2015, the AAEP developed a long-range 10-Point Plan for horse racing which included the goal of pursuing research to investigate alternative

strategies for managing EIPH that did not require race-day Lasix administration. Promising research projects are currently underway, but it is too soon to know if any will yield an alternative. While there are elements of the Horseracing Integrity Act we certainly support, the AAEP was not able to abandon our EIPH efforts and our long-held position for political expediency.

The AAEP has members who are staunch advocates on both sides of the Lasix debate. In fact, AAEP strongly advocated for the third-party administration of race-day Lasix in order to negate any premise that our support of race-day Lasix was in any way based upon racetrack veterinarians' financial interests. Suggestions from some industry stakeholders that the AAEP's support of race-day Lasix is a dollars and cents issue for veterinarians is incorrect, inaccurate, and is directly refuted by our endorsement of third-party administration.

The race-day administration of Lasix is without doubt one of the most polarizing issues in horse racing. We respect the fact that other jurisdictions around the globe compete without the use of race-day Lasix. The racing business model is complex and arguably a justification of why other countries can exist successfully without race-day Lasix. In order for the U.S. racing industry to compete in similar fashion to other global jurisdictions, a cultural shift in U.S. racing must first occur.

The AAEP understands that the development of alternative effective treatments to mitigate race-day EIPH, without affecting performance, will require resources, commitment and patience, and most importantly, time. It's a lofty goal that may be in vain. However, we are committed to doing what is best for the horse, while ensuring the integrity and sustainability of the racing industry for the future, without an emphasis on financial gains.