



June 27, 2017

Congressman Bob Latta
Chairman, Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection Subcommittee

Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr
Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce

Congressman Jan Schakowsky
Ranking Minority Member, Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection Subcommittee

Congressman Greg Walden
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce

H.R. 2651 Opposition Coalition

Dear Congressmen:

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