

Opening Statement of the Honorable Lee Terry
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade
Hearing on “H.R. 2012, a bill to improve the integrity and safety of interstate horseracing,
and for other purposes”
November 21, 2013

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Good morning and thank you for joining us for what will be the second hearing on horse related issues in the past two weeks.

As I mentioned in my remarks last week I have a great affinity for horses. Growing up, and then as a student, I worked part time at the local Aksarben Race track. And for reference - Aksarben is Nebraska spelled backwards. But it was there I got to see firsthand how the world of horse racing works—both on the front and backend of the track.

Unfortunately, I was not surprised when I read last year an article exposing the drugging of racehorses on race day. It has become so pervasive that a recent poll by the Jockey Club found that four-in-five handicappers and or bettors take into account race-day drugs and other performance enhancing drugs when betting on races.

These types of unsavory practices bring two major concerns to the forefront: the safety of the horse and jockey, and the issue of fairness.

We know that when a horse is racing, and should not be due to injury, both the animal and the human being that is riding it are exposed to a higher degree of risk. I believe this is unacceptable.

I am also deeply concerned about the implications to fairness that the pervasive use of PEDs may have.

In 1978, when Congress passed the Interstate Horseracing Act, one of the issues Congress sought to address was a responsible atmosphere for off-track betting, so that people could place wagers on horse races with a degree of certainty that this was a regulated affair. Today, you can go to a racetrack and place a bet on a horse that you happen to know may have an advantage over another horse. Which then puts you at an advantage over another better. This is not acceptable.

The Pitts-Schakowsky legislation would designate the U.S. Anti-Doping agency as the anti-doping organization with the responsibility for testing and ensuring the integrity and safety of races where off-tracking betting is permitted.

The legislation would also create a stricter regulatory framework for impressible substances and impose an outright ban on certain substances.

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