



# Press Release.

Contact: Ed Martin 859-224-7070

Issued at the request of the Arkansas Racing Commission.

## **Entire Arkansas Horse Racing Industry Opposes Federal Bills**

Little Rock, AR - The entire Arkansas horse racing industry joined the Arkansas Racing Commission today as it voted to formally oppose federal intervention and pending legislation in Washington that would shift equine welfare and anti-doping efforts to a private entity with no experience with horses.

Arkansas Racing Commission Chairman Cecil Alexander announced that the commission was “unanimous” in today’s vote to oppose efforts to pass federal legislation to shift state regulatory responsibility to the control of the private and non-accountable US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) in order to reverse a long standing equine welfare policy.

At today’s Commission meeting the following organizations representing the entire racing industry in Arkansas indicated opposition to the federal legislative attempts: Oaklawn Park, the Arkansas Thoroughbred Breeders and Horseman’s Association, and the Arkansas Horsemen’s Benevolent and Protective Association.

Mark Lamberth, a Member of the Commission and current Chair of the Association of Racing Commissioners International said the federal legislative initiative was a “departure from cooperative efforts that have historically been productive”. Lamberth said that if the USADA was interested in helping Arkansas racing, they should accept the ARCI’s invitation for collaboration instead of pursuing a “hostile takeover”.

The ARCI has noted that the pending Barr/Tonko bill would necessitate a new tax on the racing industry to pay for USADA involvement and grant the Colorado based organization tremendous control over Arkansas racing. “These bills give a private organization in Colorado Springs the unchecked authority to effectively shut down the Arkansas racing industry if we don’t pay their bill or adhere to their edicts. Local communities and local voices are shut out and this is just plain wrong,” he said.

The ARCI has noted that the USADA drug testing program is 1/37 the size of the program operated by US State racing commissions. The percentage of drug rule violations detected is roughly the same in the USADA program as it is in the current program conducted by the states.

“Racing commissions are uniform in not allowing performance enhancing substances in horses when they race,” Lamberth noted. “On the advice of the veterinary medical community, for the past thirty years a raceday administration of a medication proven to be helpful to the horse to mitigate or prevent airway lesions and exercise induced pulmonary hemorrhage is allowed. As its use is ubiquitous and disclosed to the public, no horse is given an advantage when it races and any attempt to characterize this as anything other than putting the horse first is just plain wrong.”

Lamberth questioned USADA developed anti-doping policies deployed in human sport that permit athletes to compete under the influence of substances that would never be tolerated if found in a post race sample taken from a horse following a race.

Under the World Anti-Doping Code, athletes may request a “therapeutic use exemption” to train and compete with a performance enhancing drug. According to the USADA 2014 Annual Report, about 85% of applications fully processed are approved.

“Anyone who’s concerned about drugs in racing should have a real problem with the fact that USADA thinks it OK not to tell the public which athletes are using drugs when they compete. They don’t even tell you the events involved,” he said.

Lamberth said that both the ARCI and the Arkansas Racing Commission are interested in “working with anyone who wants to help us do what we do”.

He noted that the federal legislative effort might be better focused on targeting a portion of the \$9 million federal appropriation to combat doping in professional sport in order to support efforts in horse racing.

“I find it amazing that neither bill that has been proposed actually provides any assistance to help us,” he concluded.