

## Support the Interstate Horseracing Improvement Act of 2011 (S. 886 / H.R. 1733)

The Interstate Horseracing Improvement Act of 2011 was introduced in the House by Congressman Ed Whitfield (R-KY) and in the Senate by Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) on May 4, 2011. Bipartisan support for reform emerged several years ago after Congressional testimony revealed that “chemical-warfare” was being waged in American thoroughbred horse racing.



*“There has been expressed concern, primarily among examining veterinarians and those who observe the industry, about whether the current medication practices are in the best interest of the horse.”*

*-Dr. Rick Arthur, Equine Medical Director  
of the California Horse Racing Board*



### The Problem

Since horseracing lacks a national governing body and each state currently has their own varied laws affecting horseracing, federal legislation is the only way to successfully address this doping issue. Widespread and unregulated overmedication of race horses is dangerous to horses, jockeys and the industry. Often drugged up with painkillers and performance-enhancing substances, race horses are pushed beyond their limits, leading to regular break downs with potentially severe or fatal consequences for horses and their riders. Among the countries with prominent horseracing industries, the United States stands alone in the permissive use of performance enhancing drugs. As a result, American racing is losing integrity and support. In the absence of regulations, unscrupulous trainers jeopardize horse and jockey welfare for the sake of winning. The Interstate Horseracing Act of 1978 omits a prohibition of performance enhancing drugs and desperately needs to be updated with the Interstate Horseracing Improvement Act of 2011.

### The Facts

- An average of 24 horses die while racing at U.S. tracks every week. Consequently, jockeys are injured and maimed at an alarming rate.
- Horseracing is a multibillion dollar industry, generating an estimated \$40 billion and 400,000 jobs.
- Use of performance enhancing drugs is illegal in every sport except horseracing in the United States.
- Artificially elevating a horse’s ability through drugs creates unfair competition, deceives gamblers, harms horses, and threatens jockey’s lives.
- There are 38 racing jurisdictions, all with different sets of rules causing ambiguity among states, while allowing violators to simply move on to the next state without punishment.
- Interstate off-track wagering is the financial engine of race gambling.
- Performance enhancing drugs are used to improve a horse’s performance on race day.



## The Facts (continued)

- Lasix, a diuretic, is used in well over 90% of horses before a race to flush out 30-40 gallons of water. Corticosteroids and morphine, along with countless other drugs are used to prop up horses unfit to race.
- Veterinarians and racing experts from around the world view America's practice of medicating horses as harmful to the horse and damaging to the breed.
- Congress considered banning drugs in horseracing in 1980, but instead allowed each state to make its own decisions on drugs and horseracing. This has resulted in a patchwork of state laws that encourage trainers caught doping their horses to move from state to state and continue doping and racing their horses.
- Each state racing commission would remain the primary enforcement body for rule violations.

## The Solution

Interstate Horseracing Improvement Act of 2011 will protect and promote a sustainable horseracing industry in the United States by prohibiting the use of performance enhancing drugs in interstate horseracing. This bill includes all substances that affect horse performance. The State Racing Commission is required to adopt a zero tolerance policy on drugs on race day and to test winning horses and a second random horse from the same race using accredited labs. Penalties for violating this measure are levied against any person who administers a drug to the horse on race day and the affected horse is also restricted from racing. For the first and second offense, the size of the fine and racing restrictions increase. The third violation results in a \$50,000 fine and permanent ban from all horseracing activities; this is known as the "three strikes you're out" clause, regardless of the state where the violation occurs. Funds collected from fines will offset the cost incurred by the State Racing Commission for enforcing this act. This legislation:

- Bans race day medication and racing horses under the influence of performance enhancing drugs.
- Requires stiff penalties for doping, including a "three strikes you're out" rule for multiple violations.
- Requires drug testing of race horses by independent, accredited labs.



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## Myths and Facts Regarding the Interstate Horseracing Improvement Act

**Myth: Adequate rules and enforcement already exist to prevent doping in horseracing.**

*Fact:* There are no uniform rules to prohibit performance-enhancing drugs and penalize doping violations in horseracing. Almost all American Thoroughbreds are injected with race day medication, a practice banned by almost all other countries. Trainers can violate medication rules multiple times, seemingly with impunity.

**Myth: This bill would create a new federal bureaucracy to regulate horseracing.**

*Fact:* The Interstate Horseracing Improvement Act keeps the responsibility of enforcing new nationwide rules with state racing commissions. In the absence of adequate enforcement, the Federal Trade Commission could enforce doping violations and shut down off-track betting.

**Myth: The federal government has no place in horseracing.**

*Fact:* Federal law already regulates interstate or “simulcast” racing for Thoroughbred, Standardbred (harness), and Quarter horses. This bill applies only to interstate horseracing.

**Myth: Horseracing groups can solve doping problems without federal legislation.**

*Fact:* Industry groups and state commissions have promised reform for decades. However, since horseracing lacks a national league or commissioner to set and enforce rules, amending the Interstate Horseracing Act is the only viable way to ensure safety and integrity.

**Myth: The bill could eliminate use of beneficial drugs and veterinary care for race horses.**

*Fact:* Nothing in the Interstate Horseracing Improvement Act prohibits a race horse from receiving therapeutic care or drugs. Horses should not race when needing such therapy and banning racing under the influence of drugs would ensure they do not.

