



Humane Society of New York

ANIMAL CLINIC / VLADIMIR HOROWITZ AND WANDA TOSCANINI HOROWITZ ADOPTION CENTER
306 East 59th Street, NYC 10022 / tel: (212) 752-4842

The Humane Society of New York very much thanks the Senate Committee on Racing, Gaming and Wagering and the Senate Committee on Domestic Animal Welfare, and the committees' chairs, Senator Joseph Addabbo, Jr. and Senator Monica Martinez, for conducting a public hearing to examine the health of racehorses while training and racing, and resources for aftercare. We are also very thankful to Senator Kenneth LaValle and Assemblymember Deborah Glick for sponsoring legislation (S. 4287 and A. 894) to address humane horse retirement and to Senator James Tedisco and Assemblymember Deborah Glick for sponsoring legislation to prohibit the slaughter of horses (S. 1497 and A. 1102).

Tragically, many thousands of horses from the United States are sent to slaughter in Canada and Mexico each year, often enduring horrendous conditions, injuries, and lack of essentials along the way. **Fourteen years ago**, the New York State Legislature passed a law to establish a Task Force on Retired Racehorses (which includes not only horses who have raced but those who were bred to race but never did). The Task Force's Report, which was published in 2011, identified funding streams of more than \$5 million annually and called upon the New York State Legislature to pass legislation providing for humane horse retirement funding. Despite these recommendations, no such law has been passed.

https://www.gaming.ny.gov/pdf/TFRR_ReportAndAppendicesFinal.pdf.

The 2011 New York State Task Force on Retired Racehorses Report stated:

The Task Force believes that New York's horse racing industry and its participants – not the betting public nor taxpayers – must take primary responsibility for the after care of retired racehorses. For example, if each racehorse owner was prepared to pay for six months of a transition and retraining program at a projected cost of \$2,400, every horse raced would be given an opportunity to be transitioned into a second career. However, this will not be viable for every owner and a number of horses will take longer than six months to transition while others will require full retirement. Therefore, a dedicated funding component must be established for these equine athletes. (Pages 15-16 of Report)

In this Report, the Task Force identified several possible revenue opportunities:

To ensure that resources and viable options exist for retired racehorses, the Task Force identified multiple new possible revenue streams to meet retirement and retraining needs. Primarily, the Task Force calls upon New York's tracks and Resorts World Casino New York City to collectively dedicate at least one-half of one percent of commissions from video lottery gaming revenue to Racehorse retirement efforts. This could total more than \$3.13 million annually (based on 2010 agent commission revenues to harness tracks and Finger Lakes, future estimates for Resorts World Casino New York City and NYRA revenues from Resorts World Casino New York City). The Task Force also recommends dedicating one-half of one percent of all purses at New York race tracks to retirement efforts, resulting in more than \$1.1 million in annual revenue based on 2010 purse totals. Combined with a series of additional funding streams identified in the report, these recommendations total more than \$5 million annually to help ensure retired racehorses have viable options once they leave the track. (Pages 3-4 of Report)

ESTABLISHED 1904

Supported by: Private & corporate contributions • Foundations • Benefits • Bequests
Matching gifts • Non-cash contributions • Workplace giving campaigns

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Website: www.HumaneSocietyNY.org

The other funding streams identified in the Report include 5% of the New York State Thoroughbred Breeding and Development Fund annual award revenue, 5% of the Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund annual award revenue, 10% surcharge for all Racing and Wagering Board licensing fees, and 10% of all fines for violations. The Task Force also recommended that winning jockeys and drivers dedicate a small dollar amount per win and that a fee system be implemented with the New York State Thoroughbred Breeding and Development Fund and with the Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund for 10% of fees for registering a horse going to the New York Retired Racehorse Fund. (Page 19 of Report)

In addition to this Report, in 2015 a Racehorse Aftercare Summit was held in Saratoga where individuals from the racehorse industry and equine advocates testified. The general consensus was that sustainable and mandatory funding programs were needed for racehorse retirement and that voluntary funding programs have proven to be inadequate.

Horses should not end up at slaughterhouses or abandoned. The funding recommendations in the Task Force Report will help to make a humane retirement for racehorses a reality.

More also needs to be done to protect our racehorses from injury and death. According to statistics published by the New York State Office of Information and Technology Services, thirty racehorses died this year at New York racetracks. Others were injured. This has occurred year after year. <https://data.ny.gov/Government-Finance/Equine-Death-and-Breakdown/q6ts-kwhk/data>.

We urge the New York State Legislature to pass legislation that will ban horse slaughter, will mandate a funding stream for horse aftercare as recommended by the New York State Task Force, and will provide for the humane care of horses so that deaths and injuries are avoided. While review and study are worthwhile, we urge the Legislature to do more than establish another task force. More immediate action is needed. As noted earlier, the New York State Task Force on Retired Racehorses, after six years of studying the issue, already issued a substantial report with very constructive recommendations.

Thank you again for addressing the humane care of horses in our state.

Dated: June 5, 2019

Elinor Molbegott, Esq.
Legal Counsel/Animal Issues
Humane Society of New York
306 East 59th Street
New York, NY 10022
Direct #: 516-746-6505
emolbegott@gmail.com