



New York State Humane Association

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**Statement of Patricia Valusek – President, NYS Humane Association
Regarding the January 17, 2017 hearing to discuss the Future of the New York Racing
Association**

Senator Bonacic and members of the Racing and Wagering Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony regarding the future of the New York Racing Association. We understand the focus to be whether NYRA should be allowed to continue to remain under the oversight of New York State or move toward becoming a complete private entity that would contract with the state.

Our organization opposes the complete privatization of NYRA based on our understanding of the existing relationship between the state and NYRA. NYRA's being under state oversight allows citizens to file FOIL requests pertaining to the instances of injuries, deaths, and drugging of the racing horses. Were NYRA to become a private entity under contract to the state, we fear that opportunity might be lost and that is of great concern.

Citizens are beginning to realize the harsh reality of horseracing, such as the forced running and excessive whipping of immature horses who cannot meet the physical and mental demands that are placed on them. They are also concerned that the use of performance enhancing drugs that threaten the safety and welfare of both horses and jockeys, and the use of which creates unfair competition and deceives the wagering public.

Indeed, in 2016, over 100 racehorses were killed on New York State tracks. Necropsy reports from past years have revealed that in many cases, the last days, hours, or minutes of the horses who died in those years consisted of being injected with performance enhancing drugs, being forced to run beyond their capacity by extreme whipping, running with agonizing injuries such as fractured legs, injured tendons, lacerations, or in cardiovascular collapse. FOIL requests have been submitted to the Gaming Commission to obtain records of the horses who died in 2016 and prior years.

We are concerned that complete privatization could result in NYRA's being able to conceal these significant problems that affect the animals, the jockeys, and the wagering public.

Thank you.

1/12/17

The New York State Humane Association was formed in 1900 and incorporated in 1925. Our guiding principle is to promote compassion to animals and prevent animal cruelty, through education about and enforcement of the NYS anti-cruelty laws.

The NYSHA is not a department of nor funded by New York State or any other government agency.