

HORSE *PLAYER* MONTHLY

BROUGHT TO YOU BY HORSEPLAYERS ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

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Horseplayer Thoughts on USADA Oversight

You Said Yes to US Anti-Doping Agency Oversight in Horse Racing – But Tentatively So

In July, the Horseplayers Association of North America commissioned a survey of its membership, with regards to the Tonko-Barr Bill.

Here was the question:

- On June 1, 2015, legislation was introduced by Representative Paul Tonko (D-NY) called the Thoroughbred Horse Racing Anti-Doping Act of 2015. Among the provisions in the proposed legislation, USADA would create the Thoroughbred Horseracing Anti-Doping Organization (THADO), an independent, non-governmental non-profit governed by a board comprised of six USADA board members and five independent individuals from the Thoroughbred racing industry. This organization would work collaboratively with state racing commissions and their respective staff members throughout the country. THADO would develop and administer a nationwide anti-doping program that would go into effect beginning January 1, 2017, following input from the Thoroughbred industry and the public.

The full text of the release, and details are available here:

<http://www.jockeyclub.com/Default.asp?section=Resources&area=10&story=800>

The HANA board has asked the coalition for an assurance that horseplayers would not be funding the initiative through a takeout increase.

- Via email: “This email is to formally advise before the HANA vote that anticipated increased regulatory costs that may be incidental to an enhanced regulatory framework for equine medication will not be borne by the horseplayers through an increase in the pari-mutuel takeout. Your concern on this issue is understandable and you have the full assurance of the coalition that they will neither seek nor support any initiative seeking to put all or some portion of these enhanced costs on the horseplayers who are the lifeblood of our industry.”

We are asking for your opinion, yes or no. Should the Horseplayers Association of North America lend its support to the Coalition for Horse Racing Integrity, in their quest to reform drug use and enforcement in horse racing?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	83.12%
No	16.88%

Your comments were incisive and poignant (well over 100 of you shared your opinion in the comments section of the poll). Summarizing: You appeared to have distrust of the USADA, or the Federal government, but you were very much in favor of no race day medications and uniform rules (and penalties).

Comments:

“The states and regulatory arms of each have failed to achieve this goal. Enough is enough.”

“I think that it is vital to have national standards/rules in Thoroughbred horse racing, that all tracks must follow, but, I do not think that it is good to have governments (federal or state) involved. We, in the U.S., are already over-governed, and that is too-limiting and far too expensive.”

“The public thinks racing is fixed. This would help to change that perception.”

“HANA should support any group that seeks to advance the integrity of the game. However, I STRONGLY OPPOSE support of the above legislation as it will invite government/politicians in to the sport, which is never a good thing.”

“I support the basic tenets of the issue, however, you cannot guarantee that takeout will not be increased to pay for its implementation and to do so is misleading. Local jurisdictions control takeout rates and their distribution. What is truly needed in this sport is a national board that controls universal rules on takeout, drugs, and steward rulings so that everyone is on an equal and level playing field no matter where the races take place.”

“Any move to bring uniformity across the various venues in Thoroughbred racing is a step in the right direction.”

“At the end of the day, someone has to pay for it, and raising takeout is the easiest solution when most players pay no attention to it to begin with. While The Jockey Club may be fully truthful in their intent, everything slides downhill to us.”

“I check yes with extreme reluctance.”

“Involving the federal government will only complicate this issue. Any efforts to change the sport should be made by those involved and interested in the sport. I would support the creation of a certifying body that would certify

tracks or programs meeting certain criteria, but cannot support government encroachment on what should be a private enterprise.”

“I am in favor of strict illegal drug regulations and very strict penalties for violations which would include from the owners down. But especially vets.”

“Yes, Yes, Yes! Make it easier to handicap and bet; we need regulation! Plus horse’s injuries won’t be masked by drugs leading to fewer fatalities.”

Bill Shanklin also penned an article on USADA oversight, which we recommend reading. It is available [here](#).

“In a sport built on the integrity of competition, nothing is more important than a level playing field for our stakeholders, and that includes the fans who wager on our races. Surveys and polls have consistently identified the ongoing medication concerns of bettors and a recent survey of bettors conducted by the Coalition for Horse Racing Integrity found that 98 percent of the respondents agreed that racing states should all have the same set of medication rules.

Only a national, independent, non-governmental organization like the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) can create and maintain a uniform system that protects horses and the integrity of competition for all participants, including fans.

For these reasons, the Coalition for Horse Racing Integrity urges all horseplayers to support the bill known as H.R. 3084, which has been introduced by Congressmen Barr and Tonko.”

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