

06.05.2019 | Susan Kayne on The Welfare of Horses in Racing

Greetings ... and Thank You Senator Addabbo and Senator Martinez for having the constitution and the courage to create this venue to hear the reality that horses who serve in breeding and racing face.

My name is Susan Kayne. I am a lifelong Equestrian, and a former Thoroughbred Breeder, licensed Racehorse Owner, Exercise Rider, and Stable Operator of over three decades. I have been involved with the NY Breeding Program since its inception. I too bear witness to the testimony that has come before mine as to the wonton drug abuse to mask pre-existing conditions leading to breakdowns, catastrophic injury, and the slaughter of Thoroughbreds ... I am the founder and President of Unbridled Thoroughbred Foundation a registered 501c3 that has redeemed, rehabilitated and rehomed hundreds of Thoroughbreds since 2004. Currently, Unbridled directly cares for a small herd of 20 Thoroughbreds. Collectively, they have contributed millions to the breeding and racing industry. When they could no longer race or become pregnant, they were deemed unworthy of support. Had even a mere 5% of their public sales, winnings and breeder/owner awards been set aside for their retirement they would have had the funding needed to live out their 30-year natural lifespan in green pastures. Instead, they are supported by the private donations of individuals – not residuals from their earnings nor industry-funded 'aftercare'.

Recently Unbridled took in 8 Thoroughbred from a rescue effort in Columbia County. These horses hail from big names in New York Breeding & Racing, people who are **current participants** in the industry collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars in breeders/owners awards and winnings. **When they shirked responsibility for these horses we stepped in to help.** When we reached out to NYTHA (who you will hear from later) we received a contribution of \$500 each for two of the horses. When requesting the same for two additional horses who earned over \$600,000 while racing in New York, I was informed that the NYTHA budget had been exhausted. HOW CAN BE that for horses who contributed so much to NY Racing – that no funding is made available for their aftercare? I was further advised that funds distributed by NYTHA must go to **Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance** accredited organizations.

I am confident that as a result of this hearing and your leadership and genuine care for horses that new funding will be allocated to protect our Horses. WITH SUCH ... it is vitally important to not

inadvertently set up a case of regulatory capture should you work in conjunction with the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance.

TAA is the go-to AFTERCARE organization of the racing industry. In my opinion, TAA is a brilliant public relations tool designed to protect the image of horseracing while cloaked in the name of AFTERCARE.

Here is snapshot of my experience: Equine Advocates: TAA controlling conversation through funding and suppressing the reality of the scale of thoroughbreds going to slaughter.

Unbridled is a Thoroughbred-specific organization. We meet and exceed TAA Code of Standards but we are not willing to have our voice for horses suppressed in exchange for an accreditation which strong arms us into upholding the image and integrity of the horseracing industry and posit a positive outlook on Thoroughbred aftercare and the racing industry.

The mere fact that we're having this conversation sheds light on the fact that there is a massive breach of integrity in thoroughbred racing and a lack of aftercare to address the real scope of the numbers of Thoroughbreds going to slaughter.

Why should organizations, like Unbridled who speak up for Thoroughbreds be silenced from exposing the issues that force hand of change and excluded from grant opportunities for Thoroughbreds?

My concern is for the Horses who are without voice in this conversation. Who have no say in their fate when they are drugged without their consent, when they are bleeding and dying on the racetrack, and when they are led out of their bed of golden straw onto livestock trailers to be butchered in Canada, or Mexico – or for ZOO food right here in the United States.

Of the 100,000 domesticated Horses who ship to slaughter annually it is estimated that 20% are Thoroughbreds – contracted Horsemeat Brokers & Dealers to whom I have spoken with have stated the number of Thoroughbreds exported hovers around 20,000. On a national scale, one has to question why the Jockey Club itself hasn't taken command of this situation by mandating recorded transfers of ownership, death and disposition reporting. They more than any other are in a position to commandeer the scope of the problem and get real numbers on our disappearing Thoroughbreds – yet when asked one is redirected to TAA.

I have been involved with Thoroughbreds the whole of my life, and it is unconscionable that in all that time, given the enormity of its economic impact that no real meaningful funding has been extrapolated and allocated for the aftercare of the horses whose backs it was built upon.

Though I wholeheartedly believe all AFTERCARE funding should be industry-generated, the industry has proven that it is incapable of managing to save its own athletes from slaughter. Despite billions bet on horses, no real common sense funding, industry initiatives, incentives, or enforcements exist to keep racehorses out of the hands of Kill Buyers, nor any funding source to redeem TBs from slaughter. When TAA muzzles the communications of Organizations that are positioned to speak out about the Thoroughbreds who are lamed and maimed on the racetrack, standing in Kill Pens and shipping to slaughter they are strategically hiding the plight of Thoroughbreds.

As you examine your options to support the racing industry ... I would implore you to create an industry-funded program that is **administered by an independent third party whose sole interest is the well-being of the Equine stakeholders -- as opposed to that of the industry stakeholders.**

I will be glad to provide concrete examples for questions you may have regarding this testimony, to follow up with supporting documentation of statements herein ... and to personally extend an invitation to each of you, your staff, and committees to come in person and meet the horses of Unbridled.

Submitted by Susan Kayne

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