

## Racing's Roadmap to Success

Racing has boxed itself in over the last century. Attempts to break loose have been hampered by self-interest and the lack of national leadership (*we have heard that before in this Newsletter*). The formation of the NTRA to be the national leader didn't get a good rider. Their efforts with the Safety and Integrity Alliance was an amazing move but faltered under the weight of its members. The grassroots Hay, Water and Oats has momentum. The Horse Racing Integrity Act sponsored by Congressmen Tonko and Barr showed much promise as it advanced through Congress. The Thoroughbred Safety Coalition is too new to tell what it will accomplish. There has never been too few efforts to tell racing how to improve. Most of them didn't succeed.

[Now there is another proposal](#), it seems focused and has the potential to make a difference. It is the workpiece of a group of horsemen which offers a Roadmap for Sport. It proposes four key areas of reform –a racing league office, national medication regulations, claiming race reforms and making ownership fun. It was signed by more than forty horsemen/women.

We were caught with a sentence in the proposal's introductory paragraph. *"It's time for tangible changes to finally put the welfare of our horses and the experience of our owners and fans first and foremost"*. So many times, in ThoroFan Thoughts we have begged for fans to be included in industry reforms. We see ourselves as stakeholders, while many in the industry see us as customers and guests ---a necessary revenue stream through wagering for the sport. This proposal sounds different.

First, it argues for a national racing office similar to what other sports have. The office would be overseen by a Board and headed by a commissioner. However, we would hope that the Board of Stakeholders would include a fan representative, which it doesn't in this proposal. ThoroFan, representing many fans across the country, has served on a number of committees and workgroups. We have even been invited to testify before the New York State Senate. We are ready to help.

Second, the proposal asks for "national medication regulations" which must be accepted by all and enforced by an independent body much like that proposed in the Barr/Tonko Horse Racing Integrity Act. As the document says, "let's get past endless debates".

Third, claiming races are core to many racing programs. In theory they are good. However, in practice they have many flaws. The proposals suggest a reform that will honor the idea of claiming, but protects all from the bad players. Good idea not just for fans, but for the horses who suffer the most in this high-stake game.

The final proposal wants to make ownership more fun and not so onerous with state-by-state rules and regulations. With many fans joining owner partnerships this could have a major impact on the grow of our sport. The proposal recognizes this when it says, “*Owners and fans are our most important resource and the backbone of our entire industry*”. AMEN!

To assure this doesn't follow the path of other well-meaning proposals we need to act. Our voice as fans will be valuable. We need to add our support and suggestions for improvement. Do this by e-mailing Robb Levinsky:

[rob@kenwoodracing.com](mailto:rob@kenwoodracing.com)

We can make a difference! Let's do it!