

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RACING, GAMING AND WAGERING AND  
THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC ANIMAL WELFARE**

**SUBJECT:** The Welfare of Racehorses.

**PURPOSE:** To Examine the Health of Racehorses While Training and Racing, and  
Resources for Aftercare.

**Wednesday, June 5, 2019**

**10:00 A.M. – 2 P.M.**

**Legislative Office Building, Hearing Room A, 188 State Street, Albany, NY 12247**

**Testimony of Lisa Molloy, Executive Director of ReRun**

Founded in 1996 in Kentucky, Rerun is one of the oldest Thoroughbred retraining and adoption programs in the country and has had a continued presence in New York since 2002 when we opened the first facility to serve the Finger Lakes racetrack. In December of 2015, ReRun moved to 21 acres in New York's Rensselaer County, just outside of Albany, focusing the majority of our efforts in New York to better serve both the horsemen and racehorses of the state. Our facility includes a 48-stall barn, two tack rooms and a 200-foot-by-100-foot indoor arena. We are the largest Thoroughbred aftercare program headquartered in New York and boast the premier adoption facility in the North East, offering superior rehabilitation, retraining and retirement options for racehorses. We have partnered with NYTHA and the TAKE THE LEAD Program since its inception in 2013, and are one of the original 23 organizations first accredited by the TAA. We are also verified by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries and are staffed by horse industry professionals, have three vets including an orthopedic surgeon on the board of directors and those in upper management hold degrees in equine management. We assist over 100 horses per year, every horse is individually evaluated and a comprehensive plan formed with veterinary oversight to better assist and place the horse.

The Five Freedoms mentioned in the Brambell Report which have become accepted throughout the world and even adopted by the United States ASPCA allows equines freedom from thirst and hunger, freedom from discomfort so that they are kept in a suitable environment, having access to shelter and a decent place to sleep. It states that all attempts should be made to avoid pain, injury and disease by preventing them from getting ill or injured and by making sure animals are diagnosed and treated rapidly if they do by having access to veterinary care as needed. They too should have freedom from fear and distress by making sure their conditions and treatment avoid mental suffering along with freedom to behave normally by making sure animals have enough space and the proper facilities. As it stands today, the racing industry here in New York stands behind and upholds the Five Freedoms. To further ensure the safety of horses retiring to and adopted out by ReRun, we are now offering potential and past adopters the ability to take a self-paced course online with UC Davis that explores equine physiology, behavior and basic needs, including housing, nutrition, hygiene and disease management. Those wishing to adopt will receive a credit towards an adoptable horse and those that have already adopted will receive reimbursement of their course fee. By investing in our adopters, we secure brighter, safer futures for our horses. We also offer end of life services and reimburse owners of Thoroughbreds that wish to euthanize their horse based on a veterinary diagnosis but lack the funding.

OVER

These are typically privately-owned Thoroughbreds that have not come via any program operating in the state.

Although our primary purpose is rehab and adoption, we do keep a small herd that have a permanent home with us here in New York. Part of the group you might call our ambassadors, they are a trio of New York-breds named Saratoga Snacks, West Hills Giant and Most Happy Fella. Collectively, they won 22 races and earned more than \$2.2 million. They are a huge focal point on social media, they love to interact with visitors and have become big fan favorites.

As the wife of a military veteran and contractor with much of 15 years spent on the ground in Afghanistan, we are also proud to partner with Saratoga War Horse, which is an equine-based program helping veterans experiencing psychological trauma as a result of their military service. The program offers equine-assisted therapy to veterans, and members of our permanent herd have found a second calling working in the program. We provide full use of our facilities, horses and staff at no cost, meaning more funding can be used to reach veterans in crisis. One horse that came to us via TAKE THE LEAD, Lungs, has found his calling with this program. Not deemed to be a viable adoption candidate, he has found this career path working with veterans something he was born to do. The veterans really bond with him and form a very powerful connection, which one veteran said has been the greatest experience of his life. It demonstrates how versatile our Thoroughbreds are and just how diverse their second careers can be. We have had over 30 veterans already benefit from our equine-assisted therapy in 2019.

I believe I offer a unique perspective, having worked in the horse industry all over the U.S. and Europe and not solely limited to racing and Thoroughbreds, but also show horses and international level polo. The care and welfare of horses racing and retiring in New York is something to be proud of and has set the standard not just in the U.S. but internationally, having become a model for other programs and retirement initiatives and is something that other states should aspire to. The New York Thoroughbred industry has the most robust and successful aftercare program and makes the greatest effort to ensure safe retirement for its horses. We're proud to be an integral part of those efforts.