

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Are Some USVI Horses Drugged With Cocaine And Heroine Before Races? Opinion From Former A.G. Yes Says

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Here, in the USVI, horses-racing is an unregulated sport. The statute providing for the new \$30 million dollar Racino Development included a provision on anti-doping. The Senate rejected the anti-doping section. I drafted that anti-doping statute.

In the United States, there is an outcry is a result of the widespread "epidemic" use of furosemide (Lasix) being administered as a performance enhancer and not to treat exercised-induced pulmonary hemorrhage (EIPH). Racing Industry Experts opine that if every racing thoroughbred is a bleeder, Lasix isn't the answer, but just a cover-up of a

more endemic problem within the breed.

Before May 10, 2017, I thought the issue of doping was the use of Lasix as a “performance enhancer.” However, in the lobby of the 32nd Legislature’s special session, I was beset by the arguments from various individuals that anti-doping would not work in the USVI because many of the horses are cripples. Others identified some prominent men in the community as some of the worst horse owners due to the purchasing and inhumanely racing of “disposable” horses that had seen better days.

I also learned that ALL USVI horses are doped. In fact, some receive speedballs before the race (Cocaine & Heroin). It turns out Lasix, supposedly an anti-bleeding medication is better known and widely used as a diuretic to flush out traces of other illegal drugs. Thus, the objections to prohibiting Lasix is much more sinister.

Doping and the indiscriminate or inappropriate use of medications are detrimental not only to the integrity of the sport but also to the health, welfare, and safety of the racehorses, who cannot refuse such maltreatment, and the jockeys who ride them. In the US, the jockeys’ insurance coverage for personal injury is denied if an investigation reveals that the horse has been doped. Here, the jockeys ride without insurance and will continue to be uninsured if we do not make sweeping changes to the horse racing industry.

Yesterday, two Senators, Senator Neville James and Senator Kurt Violet, said they would only agree to some version of anti-doping if we had “our own lab.” This raised red flags for me.

I had a very heavy heart and did not sleep all night. At about dawn, the answer came. I don’t call out the VIPD, the DEA, the FBI or any other government agency to do anything. I call out the preachers, pastors and priests to call upon the 14 Senators at the 32nd Legislature and to become advocates from the pulpit in an effort to protect one of God’s magnificent creations. His eye is on the sparrow.

I also call upon other animal lovers. Flood these senators with calls, letters and make public statements at the next committee meeting tentatively scheduled with Senator Neville James’ Committee in St. Croix on May 30, 2017.

Opinion submitted by: Attorney Terri Griffiths, an animal lover and [former USVI attorney general](#).