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Racehorse Welfare:

I believe that it is vital that the racing industry follows high welfare standards for all horses - before, during and after racing. We need robust and constantly improving equine welfare regulations to ensure the highest standards for the welfare and safety of racehorses.

I want equine care to be at the forefront of the industry's concerns at all times. All animals deserve protection, whether they are on a farm, at home as a pet, at large in the wild or in the sea.

As constituents may know, a rule has been introduced signing out any horse racing in Britain from the food chain, both human and animal. I understand the BHA states that it has a euthanasia code to help trainers and owners with making end-of-life decisions.

More widely, as constituents may be aware, in 2019, the BHA set up an independently chaired Horse Welfare Board (HWB) tasked with developing a comprehensive equine welfare strategy. The strategy has now been published. It makes 20 recommendations and focuses on better horse safety, a better quality of life, a commitment to lifetime responsibility based on tracing every racehorse from birth, and the growth and maintenance of public trust. It called for a consultation on the use of the whip with, as a minimum, increased penalties for violations of the whip rules.

In June 2022 the BHA published its report following such a consultation on the future of the use of the whip in racing. It has not banned the use of the whip. It instead has chosen to introduce further restrictions such as only allowing the whip to be used for encouragement in the backhand position and to introduce disqualification for jockeys who egregiously break rules.

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