



500 Redland Court, Suite 105
Owings Mills, MD 21117
Phone: 410.902.6842
info@mdhorsemen.com

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House Appropriations Committee
120 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Barnes and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (MTHA), representing the more than 3,000 owners and trainers who race and stable horses in Maryland, I write in strong support of House Bill 911, an Emergency Bill authorizing pari-mutuel wagering on limited Arabian breed horse racing at Laurel Park.

House Bill 911 is both practical and necessary.

For the past several years, Pimlico Race Course has proudly hosted the UAE President's Cup for Arabian Horses on Preakness Day. With the historic renovation of Pimlico now underway, the 2026 Preakness Stakes will be conducted at Laurel Park. Absent the authority provided in HB 911, Maryland would be unable to present this internationally significant Arabian race at Laurel — jeopardizing an event that has become an important part of Preakness Day and Maryland's broader global racing profile.

The UAE President's Cup is not simply another race on the program. It is one of the most prestigious Arabian race series in the world. Since 2020, the Maryland Jockey Club has partnered to present this internationally recognized event, welcoming global participants, dignitaries, and investment into our state. Its inclusion on Preakness Day enhances Maryland's international media exposure, strengthens diplomatic and commercial relationships, and reinforces our state's reputation as a world-class racing jurisdiction.

From the perspective of Maryland horsemen, this legislation protects the integrity and continuity of one of our most important racing days. It ensures that Maryland can continue to honor its partnership with the UAE President's Cup while Pimlico is under renovation, and it preserves the economic and cultural benefits associated with this event. The bill does not expand racing in a broad or unchecked manner; rather, it provides limited authority to conduct Arabian racing at Laurel Park in a focused and responsible way.

Because HB 911 is an Emergency Bill, enactment must occur prior to Saturday, May 16, 2026, to ensure seamless planning and execution of Preakness Day. Timely passage will provide certainty to event organizers, international participants, and Maryland's racing community.

Maryland's racing industry has worked diligently in recent years to modernize facilities, strengthen partnerships, and position our state competitively on the national and international stage. Approval of House Bill 911 allows us to continue building on that momentum and to connect Maryland's proud racing heritage with a meaningful international opportunity.

For these reasons, the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 911.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued support of Maryland's racing industry.

Sincerely,

David Richardson
Executive Director