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MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797
www.mdhorsecouncil.org

One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

In the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee, February 18, 2026

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on SB 453

Horse Racing - Laurel Park - Arabian Breed Racing Authorization - FAVORABLE

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the state-wide horse industry in Maryland. Our members include horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted therapy programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We represent the interests of over 700,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own or know and love them.

The UAE President Cup began in 1994. In partnership with the Arabian Jockey Club, UAE President Cup races have been held at Pimlico on the same card as the Preakness in 2012, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2025.

The 2025 UAE President Cup was held at Pimlico for Preakness 150 on May 17, 2025, and was the richest Arabian horse race in American history with a purse of \$200,000.

The Horse Council supports continuing this tradition of hosting Arabian racing at Laurel Park while Pimlico reconstruction is underway.

We urge a Favorable report on SB 453.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL
(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773)
info@mdhorsecouncil.org

SB 453 - MTHA - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Jason Weintraub

Position: FAV



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

February 15, 2026

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Guzzone 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 Senate Bill 453, an Emergency Bill authorizing pari-mutuel wagering on limited Arabian breed horse racing at Laurel Park.

Senate Bill 453 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 SB 453, 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.

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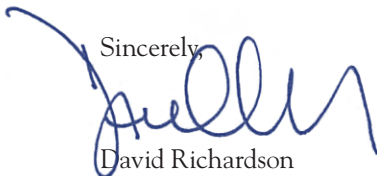
Because SB 453 is an Emergency Bill, enactment must occur prior to Saturday, May 16, 2026, to ensure seamless planning and execution of Preakness Day. Timely passage will provide certainty to event organizers, international participants, and Maryland's racing community.

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 Senate Bill 453 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 Senate Bill 453.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richardson", written over the word "Sincerely,".

David Richardson
Executive Director