

Chapter 83

(House Bill 228)

AN ACT concerning

Horse Racing – Prohibited Acts – Slaughter of Racehorses for Commercial Purposes

FOR the purpose of prohibiting a person from slaughtering or causing the slaughter of a racehorse in the State for certain commercial purposes; prohibiting a person from purchasing, selling, transferring, offering for sale, importing into the State, or transporting a racehorse if the person knows or reasonably should know that the racehorse will be slaughtered for certain commercial purposes; requiring certain fines collected by the State Racing Commission to be distributed to the racing Special Fund; authorizing the State Racing Commission and the State Department of Agriculture to revoke or suspend certain licenses under certain circumstances; and generally relating to the slaughter of racehorses for commercial purposes.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
 Article – Business Regulation
 Section 11–402
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2024 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY adding to
 Article – Business Regulation
 Section 11–1002
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2024 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Business Regulation

11–402.

The Special Fund consists of:

- (1) the State share of daily licensee fees;
- (2) pari–mutuel taxes;
- (3) the impact aid under § 11–812 of this title;

- (4) money from uncashed pari-mutuel tickets that are from bets made into the betting pools of licensees;
- (5) any permit fees under §§ 11-820 and 11-832 of this title; [and]
- (6) subject to § 11-403(a)(9) and (b) of this subtitle, money from the State Lottery Fund distributed under § 9-120(b) of the State Government Article; AND
- (7) ANY FINES COLLECTED UNDER § 11-1002(D) OF THIS TITLE.**

11-1002.**(A) IN THIS SECTION, “RACEHORSE” MEANS A HORSE:**

- (1) BRED OR INTENDED FOR RACING, INCLUDING A WEANLING, YEARLING, HORSE IN TRAINING, OR RACEHORSE BREEDING STOCK WITH A RECORD OF HAVING PRODUCED OR SIRED OFFSPRING INTENDED FOR RACING; OR**
- (2) THAT HAS BEEN RECORDED ON THE BACKSTRETCH OF A TRACK IN THE STATE, HAS HAD A RECORDED WORKOUT ON A TRACK IN THE STATE, OR HAS PARTICIPATED IN A RACE MEETING IN THE STATE WHERE PARI-MUTUEL BETTING IS ALLOWED.**

(B) A PERSON MAY NOT:

- (1) SLAUGHTER OR CAUSE THE SLAUGHTER OF A RACEHORSE IN THE STATE FOR ANY COMMERCIAL PURPOSE, INCLUDING FOR HUMAN OR ANIMAL CONSUMPTION; OR**
- (2) PURCHASE, SELL, TRANSFER, OFFER FOR SALE, IMPORT INTO THE STATE, OR TRANSPORT A RACEHORSE IF THE PERSON KNOWS OR REASONABLY SHOULD KNOW THAT THE RACEHORSE WILL BE SLAUGHTERED FOR A COMMERCIAL PURPOSE, INCLUDING FOR HUMAN OR ANIMAL CONSUMPTION.**

(C) (1) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION:

- (I) FOR A FIRST OFFENSE, IS SUBJECT TO A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$1,000 OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 1 YEAR OR BOTH; OR**
- (II) FOR A SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE, IS SUBJECT TO A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$2,000 OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 1 YEAR OR BOTH.**

(2) A CORPORATION, PARTNERSHIP, OR ANY OTHER ENTITY THAT VIOLATES THIS SECTION:

(I) FOR A FIRST OFFENSE, IS SUBJECT TO A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$2,500; OR

(II) FOR A SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE, IS SUBJECT TO A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$5,000.

(D) FINES COLLECTED BY THE COMMISSION AS A RESULT OF VIOLATIONS UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE SPECIAL FUND ESTABLISHED UNDER § 11-401 OF THIS TITLE.

(E) IF THE COMMISSION OR THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FINDS THAT A PERSON HAS VIOLATED THIS SECTION:

(1) THE COMMISSION MAY REVOKE OR SUSPEND ANY LICENSE ISSUED TO THE PERSON BY THE COMMISSION; AND

(2) THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE MAY REVOKE OR SUSPEND ANY LICENSE ISSUED TO THE PERSON BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

(F) THE COMMISSION, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION.

(G) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO PROHIBIT HUMANE EUTHANASIA OF A RACEHORSE BY A LICENSED VETERINARIAN FOR REASONS UNRELATED TO COMMERCIAL PURPOSES, INCLUDING SEVERE INJURY, MAIMING, OR INJURY THAT RESULTS IN NO QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE RACEHORSE, AS DETERMINED BY A LICENSED VETERINARIAN.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor, April 14, 2026.