

03/25/2024

Testimony Against Maryland SB 452: Protecting the horse industry, small business wellness industry and many other industries that would more than likely fold if this bill passes.

Honorable Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

This bill, as I read it and understand it, would cause a number of small businesses, farms and wellness businesses to fold. If this bill passes it will either cause a sharp rise in liability insurance, or in my case insurance to terminate.

My new business, A Pivotal Shift LLC, established in January 2024, is in the mental health industry, I partner with horses to help humans heal, grow, and learn through coaching and interacting with the horses. I am also the Director for the Maryland Chapter of Hope Held by a Horse, a 501c3 that provides a monthly free program to provide emotional support to individuals on their cancer journey. Working with my equine partners without having signed waivers, my insurance will terminate, and I will no longer be able to provide these services.

As a horse owner who boards my horse and participates in equine shows and events, I can see this bill making it very difficult to afford board in the state of Maryland as small farms would have to increase their board fees due to increased liability insurance costs or having to close their doors to boarders altogether.

This bill was pushed through very quietly, I was just made aware of it last week via email from the Maryland Horse Council. I do not believe anyone took the time to think about the effects this will have on the Maryland horse industry or the wellness community, this will affect yoga teachers, as well as many other wellness-based services provided in this state.

It seems to me passing this bill will have a profound effect on the Maryland economy. As soon as I became aware, I shared this bill with as many horses, yoga, and other small wellness and recreational business. My thought while reading the bill was "What are they trying to do to small service businesses?"

As a resident of Maryland, I am very disappointed with the lack of attention that this bill had and the way it was haphazardly handled in its passing through the committees.

I urge you to take another look at this bill and give some thought to all those small local Maryland businesses who will be forced to fold due to this one quiet bill.

Sincerely,



Kristen Ann Burton