

Date: March 25, 2024

Dear Legislators,

Regarding SB 0452

My parents owned MerryMount Equestrian Center in Prince George's County for over 40 years. Every person who came to ride signed a liability waiver to protect us, our employees and lively hood should anything happen. Yes, some fingers were bitten and a couple of broken arms but horse back riding, along with any other sport, can be dangerous. We worked very hard to keep every person and horse safe. This bill would have placed us in the dilemma between closing down or assuming all the risk.

Many of the students out of MerryMount have gone forward to become veterinarians, trainers, college coaches, jockeys, hay farmers, equestrian center business owners, life long equestrian owners and enthusiasts. This bill could possibly reduce or eliminate equestrian organizations and reduce future participants eroding Maryland's Equine Heritage.

Our Insurance provider required we submit our written Barn Policy, Boarder Contract and Liability Waiver to review/accept which included the requirement that every boarder and student sign prior to issuing an Insurance Policy. A Further requirement of liability waiver must extended to the Boarder's or Student's guests.

Maryland hosts 3 of the most prestigious Equine events in the world; The Washington International Horse Show, the Maryland 5 Star and the Preakness. I easily foresee they would relocate to a more inviting state. Such as North Carolina which State law includes that an equine activity sponsor or equine professional is not liable for injury to or death of a participant in equine activities, resulting exclusively from the inherent risk of equine activities. This is required to be posted. Many other states including Virginia and New Jersey have similar laws in place.

This bill could destroy Maryland's Equine History and unintentionally close thousands of small businesses. Least we forget where would the horses go?

Sincerely,



Catherine Farley