

RE: SB0452

I am a horse enthusiast who frequents horse events in Maryland. I am concerned that passage of this bill will result in the closure of many of the venues where I participate. I am not a Maryland resident but travel to the state to participate in these events. Passage of this bill will result in many venues being unable to bear the additional insurance costs and costs associated with potential litigation; ultimately these venues would be forced to close. Loss of business from out-of-state visitors would not only affect the venues - horse lesson barns, boarding stables, farms - but also the ancillary businesses that provide services to them. Additionally this could have a chilling effect on therapeutic riding centers, which provide services to individuals who benefit from interaction with horses.

Nearby states such as Virginia have laws that recognize that riding horses is an “inherently dangerous” activity. As such no person shall be held liable for the death or injury of another person as a result of participating in a horse event. That is a known risk one takes as a rider or participant in equine activities. Passage of this law as drafted will result in equine businesses relocating to states that have laws supporting the equine industry.

I am surprised that a state that promotes it’s “rich equestrian heritage” [source: <https://www.visitmaryland.org/article/marylands-horse-heritage>] would take this action which threatens the very existence of the horse community and associated businesses that rely on this industry in Maryland.

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