

To: Maryland House Judiciary Committee
From: Gina Guffey

Attn: SB 452

Dear Sirs and Madams,

I am a resident of St. Mary's County and a horse owner.

I have recently become aware of SB 452, which, if passed, would strip lesson barns, boarding barns, rental stables, and competition venues — including the international competition venues in the state — of any liability protections for recreational activities. It would do the same for any privately owned athletic facilities in the state, regardless of the sport at issue.

This will also make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for these facilities to get insurance for their activities.

The current owner of the boarding and lesson facility where I have boarded horses since 1989 has said that if this Bill passes it would require them to close their doors.

They currently have around 30 lesson horses and have taught beginner to advanced riders for over 40 years. They also provide boarding facilities for my horse and 15-20 other privately owned horses.

They take their students to competitions throughout the state including the Prince George's Equestrian Center. I also participate in competitions throughout the state through the Potomac Valley Dressage Association.

This Bill will strike a blow to the recreational and competition sector of the horse industry. This industry was one of the few to actually grow during Covid because of the need for outdoor and fresh air activities during that time.

Please consider opposing the bill — or at minimum — amending the bill so that it exempts agricultural uses and equine activities.

Thank you so much for your attention to this matter.

I would be happy to talk with you if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Gina Guffey
Leonardtown, MD
204-298-2333