

Storehouse Ministries International DbA: Racetrack Chaplaincy of Maryland

ATT: Senate and Budget Committee

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The Racetrack Chaplaincy of Maryland is a non-profit organization based in Maryland. As a retired jockey, I recognized the need for support within the horse racing community, and now I work closely with the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (MTHA) to provide essential services. In 2021, Storehouse Ministries also became affiliated with the Racetrack Chaplaincy of America, operating under the direction of a board of directors to offer support services to backstretch workers, support personnel, jockeys, and other stakeholders. Chaplaincy under the umbrella of "The Racetrack Chaplaincy of America" is an established presence on most racetracks around the country. Its primary focus is the spiritual, emotional, physical, and social needs of its people living and working on a racetrack.

There is currently a rotating residential workforce of 300 plus and another 1000 plus others that work but live off track.

The Chaplaincy currently provides the following services:

- Collaboration with local church food pantry "Love Wins Pantry" to provide pantry supplies at the track so no one should ever go hungry. We want to reach everyone on our track.
- Hosts a weekly church service with a full meal for attendees. We feed about 40 but would like to reach so many more as no cooking is allowed on the racetrack.
- Provides transportation for medical and social services.
- Performs interdenominational Christian services: Weddings, funerals/memorial Services, baptisms, bible studies, worship services and hospital visits
- Chaplain advice and spiritual Support
- Mental Health Support with referrals to professionals

- Assistance with sign-up for Health Insurance through the Maryland Health Exchange.
- Host on track AA meeting. To date in 2024, the racetrack has lost 3 workers from alcohol/health related issues.
- ESL Second Language
- Physiotherapy, (PT) and massage therapy services to assist with pain management. without medication.
- Tax preparation clinic.
- Immigration services clinic
- Pathway to citizenship counseling.
- Advice & translation related to Social Services. Immigration, Social Security office, IRS, banks, banking, and civil services

We express our support for this bill as it will allow the Racetrack Chaplaincy of Maryland to expand on current services and provide new needed services so desperately needed by our community.

With the advantage of having a Chaplain directly involved with its people by walking the grounds daily we are fortunate enough to meet people at their point of need, and with being interactive at a grass roots level, we can ensure everyone needs are met no matter how small the request.

The advantage the Chaplaincy has is that the Chaplain goes to the people. With a visible presence, people are inclined to reach out and ask for help in times of need. I've been approached by individuals with a toothache and link them to the services available to rectify their problem.

With a Chaplain walking the grounds consistently the Chaplaincy takes on the role of first responders, in-times of trouble we are the first ones they see and reach out to, and we provide the help and make referrals as needed. Oftentimes a handshake, a hug, or a prayer is all they need to get through that day.

I ask that you please support HB0337 and vote in favor of this critical funding, it has the potential to truly change lives.