

Hugh McMahon
384 Lankford Road
Harwood, MD 20776
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Dear Honorable Members of the General Assembly,

My name is Hugh McMahon and I am a racehorse trainer at Laurel Park. I have been an employer there since 2010 and many of my employees have remained with me since the start of my business. As an employer of twenty people, who mostly live on the racetrack grounds, I understand their spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. Ron Singh also identifies their needs and for the past twelve years has volunteered, walking the barn areas, meeting with people, winning their trust, as he offers them prayers, encouragement, counselling. Ron has also made connections with local churches and food pantries and makes regular deliveries to the back stretch, meeting food and clothing needs. Most back stretch workers are Latino, they live on site, they have Catholic Christian backgrounds and have left home and family for better employment. These people have no church replacement except for the service hosted by Chaplain Ron on Wednesdays in the Rec Room. This meeting is regularly attended by over sixty people, which fills the room to capacity. This has brought much needed community and connection.

Ron's role at the racetrack is unique as he is a daily presence, making himself available to the people there. The track community have an established relationship with Ron and he is a comforting figure, especially in times of grief and injury. Ron often visits track workers when they are sick or hospitalized. Although Ron does not have a designated space at the track, he makes himself available 24/7.

Ron's ministry is also welcomed on race days as he leads the jockeys and starting gate crew in prayer and scripture reading before the first race. This brings everyone together and promotes community. That sense of community plays a key role in healthy competition during racing. The nature of the business at the racetrack can lend itself to aggressive and overly competitive behaviors, as winning and losing translate as success and failure. Ron's presence is also important for jockeys who may be facing difficulties and mental health challenges in a sport that is isolating, stressful and physically demanding.

The need for an established chaplaincy in Maryland is urgent. This vital role is recognized by all the other racetracks throughout the United States which are under the

umbrella of the Racetrack Chaplaincy of America. Maryland stands alone, entirely dependent on volunteer efforts.