

Hugh McMahonSB0595.pdf

Uploaded by: Hugh McMahon

Position: FAV

Hugh McMahon
384 Lankford Road
Harwood, MD 20776
January 28th 2025

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.

Testimony - backstretch workers Senate.pages.pdf

Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797
www.mdhorsecouncil.org

One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

In the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee, March 6, 2025

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on SB 595

State Lottery Fund - Laurel Race Course - Local Impact Aid - FAVORABLE

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the state-wide horse industry in Maryland. Our members include race horse owners and trainers, and racetracks, as well as horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted therapy programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We represent over 700,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and/or love them.

Maryland's "backstretch workers" who provide for and assist in the care, wellbeing and/or training of race horses are among the hardest working individuals in the Maryland horse industry. They often work long hours under difficult conditions for minimal compensation.

They are well-deserving of the programs and services that SB 595 will facilitate.

The Maryland Horse Council urges the Committee to give SB 595 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL
(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773)
Info@mdhorsecouncil.org

SB 595 - MTHA_MHBA_MJC- Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Jason Weintraub

Position: FAV



March 6, 2025

SB 595 - State Lottery Fund - Laurel Race Course - Local Impact Aid

FAVORABLE

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Budget and Tax Committee,

Senate Bill 595, sponsored by Vice-Chair Rosapepe, proposes a vital amendment to the distribution of the State Lottery Fund. This bill allocates a portion of proceeds from a designated lottery game to provide supplemental local impact aid to Anne Arundel County, Howard County, and the City of Laurel. These funds will not only support essential community projects but also significantly bolster the benevolence efforts undertaken by the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association and Maryland Jockey Club, benefiting thousands of hardworking horsemen who form the backbone of our industry.

Our industry's comprehensive benevolence program plays a critical role in ensuring the well-being of the individuals and families who comprise Maryland's Thoroughbred racing community. This program includes primary health care services through our renowned Horsemen's Health System in partnership with MedStar Health; free dental care provided via a collaboration with Silver Spring's Mobile Dentist; free prescription service to assist horsemen with medication access; free pension programs to secure financial stability for retirees; free workforce housing to support those working tirelessly in our industry; educational and advancement opportunities and many additional services designed to uplift and sustain our dedicated community members.

As our industry navigates challenges, including reduced racing dates, supplemental funds made available through Senate Bill 595 would provide crucial stability and resources. These funds would help sustain the programs that directly enhance the lives of those who contribute to Maryland's rich racing tradition, ensuring the continued success of this vibrant industry.

Moreover, Senate Bill 595 represents a meaningful investment in our local communities, fostering economic growth while directly benefiting individuals in Anne Arundel County, Howard County, and the City of Laurel. By leveraging proceeds from the State Lottery Fund, the bill creates a sustainable funding mechanism for community development without placing additional burdens on taxpayers.

Our organizations respectfully urge the Committee to give Senate Bill 595 a favorable report. This legislation will deliver a lasting and positive impact, both for the Maryland Thoroughbred horsemen and the broader communities served by these supplemental local impact funds.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical legislation. We would be happy to answer any questions or provide further information to support its passage.



Katharine M. Voss
President, MTHA

Bill Knauf
President, MJC



Kent Murray
President, MHBA

Mnauel GallegosSB0595.pdf

Uploaded by: José Manuel Gallegos Hernandez

Position: FAV

My name is Manuel Gallegos husband and father of 3 and I want to share the story of how my life took a radical turn whe i encountered pastor Ronal who tohught me that Jesus loved me. I want to share my story for the first time to reach out to those who feel lost and trapped in a destructive lifestyle just like I was.

It all began when I started working at the Race Track where I was surrounded by alcohol and other substances due to a severe depression that people experience, that is when I discovered that alcohol took away some of the pain I was experiencing and I started beeing heavily involved into alcohol, this situation lead me to many family problems, feeling lost and not knowing how to be a good father and husband, leaving my wife raise our 3 kids all by herself.

One day I met Pastor Ronald at the Race Track, we became really good friends, and ivited me over to a church he was attending where eventually became pastor, and started teaching us about Faith, Jesus and how important mental health is , that is when I felt like my life started to make sense, and decided I wanted to help Pastor Ronald change others at the Race Track who feel trapped in addiction and can't find the way out of depression.

SB 595 Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Julie Hummer

Position: FAV



COUNTY COUNCIL OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

JULIE K. HUMMER
Fourth District

RE: Senate Bill 595

Position: Support

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and members of the committee,

Thank you for your hard work each and every day for our great state and thank you to Delegate Lehman for sponsoring this legislation. As the District 4 Anne Arundel County Councilmember, I represent Laurel Race Course and its surrounding areas. I also Chair the Laurel Race Course Impact Fee Advisory Committee that makes annual grant recommendations for projects benefiting the communities within a 3-mile radius of the racetrack.

Within this 3-mile radius is the racetrack and its facilities, thus it includes hundreds of racetrack employees, many of whom live on the property. With the temporary closure of Pimlico, additional track workers such as grooms, hotwalkers, and jockeys, have relocated to Laurel. Many of these workers are in need of additional physical and mental health services, drug and alcohol support and treatment, transportation, and nutrition and wellness programs. While our current committee recommends approximately \$350,000 funding for programs and projects around the track each year, the added workers and specific needs of the track employees are greater than this allocation can address. Our funds already go for important community services such as food relief, outreach to the elderly and people with disabilities, afterschool enrichment programs, park enhancements, and support for the fire department. While we recognize and wish to assist the needs of the track workers, we already must deny numerous applications a year because of funding limitations.

This legislation would authorize additional funding specifically for the backstretch workers at Laurel Race Course for the next couple of years until Pimlico reopens and the track employees relocate to new facilities. I ask that you support this bill so that our community may better serve the needs of these workers who are experiencing uncertainty and relocation over the coming years as horse racing evolves in the state of Maryland. While \$500,000 may not seem like much in the context of a \$67 billion state budget, it would have a huge impact on a group of workers vital to the horse racing industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie K. Hummer".

Julie K. Hummer
Anne Arundel County Council

EliseoSB0595.pdf

Uploaded by: kellie witte

Position: FAV

Hi my name is Eliseo Torres,

I've been working for more than 30 years in Maryland horse racing. I work 7 days a week. I start my work at 4:00 in the morning. We don't have no transportation food washing laundry and a lot of more things. The person he knocked on the door in my room, it was it was the church people, bring us food, blankets, water, sweaters, a lot of very good things.

Thank you to the Beautiful People, they are beautiful people, and God is help us. A person being a nice heart. Now I'm blessing to have them. Thank you thank you God for these people loving so much for us because it's a lot of drunk and drugs and they help us all the time, and thank you God for these kind of people.

SB0595TESTIMONY KELLIE WITTE.pdf

Uploaded by: kellie witte

Position: FAV

Dear committee members,

Please support Bill SB0595.

My name is Kellie Witte; I am an exercise Rider at Laurel Park. Chaplin Ron has been an integral part of my life in many ways, Especially when I got hurt a few weeks ago when he made sure to call me to make sure I was doing okay. The chaplaincy is very important to myself and my co-workers. There are thousands of us on the racetrack that are comforted knowing that Chaplin Ron and his team are there for us 24/7.

I urge you to support Bill SB0595.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kellie Witte

SB 595_AACFB Testimony FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Leah Paley

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 595

State Lottery Fund – Laurel Race Course – Local Impact Aid

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

March 6, 2025

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

The Anne Arundel County Food Bank (AACFB) strongly supports SB 595, which aims to provide \$500,000 in supplemental local impact aid to Anne Arundel County, Howard County, and the City of Laurel to meet the growing demand for supplemental food, medical assistance, and other vital services to support race track-based backstretch workers employed at Laurel Race Course and residents living in the 20724 postal zip code.

For the past 39 years, AACFB has provided critical services such as food, emergency supplies, and other necessities free of charge to our extensive network of partners and the neighbors we serve throughout Anne Arundel County. Last year, in collaboration with our 76 Network Partners, we distributed 4.1 million pounds of food and essential supplies like baby diapers and feminine hygiene products, including 1.3 million pounds of fresh produce and lean proteins.

Due to increasing housing costs, fluctuating food prices, and the expiration of pandemic public assistance, including the expanded Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, requests for emergency food assistance remain higher than before the pandemic and show no sign of abating. SNAP benefits (if a family is eligible) do not cover the entirety of a household's monthly food expenses. Further, items such as diapers and wipes are not covered under SNAP.

Currently, Anne Arundel County's [food-insecure population is 61,640](#). That number is 10.5% of our community's residents, up from 47,260 (8.1%) just last year. According to [the most recent ALICE Report](#), of the 226,285 Anne Arundel County households, 33% (74,655) are below the ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) threshold. Twenty-six percent are, however, deemed to be above the federal poverty line and, therefore, may not qualify for federal assistance programs, including SNAP benefits. According to the most recent U.S. Census data, 9.8% of Laurel-area residents live in poverty.

With these statistics, it is unsurprising that our community's need for supplemental food remains alarmingly high. Last year, in Anne Arundel County's fourth district, which includes the 20724 postal zip code, AACFB distributed food through our network partners at 16 locations, collectively providing over 68,000 instances of assistance to our neighbors experiencing food insecurity, which is 198 percent more than the year prior. The Anne Arundel County Food Bank is currently averaging more than 51,000 instances of assistance monthly across our entire network of partners. This is 6% more than last year and 19% more than two years ago. Even more staggering, it is 85% higher than 2019, one year before the pandemic.

Between July and December 2024, 6,800 individuals received food and/or diapers at an AACFB-supported pantry in the 20724 postal zip code. AACFB received \$50,000 through the Laurel Race Course Impact Grant program



for the current fiscal year to purchase food and diapers to be distributed through network partner pantries near the Laurel Race Course. These funds were fully expended within the first four months of the fiscal year. While AACFB has some funding from other sources to assist Laurel-area residents throughout the remainder of the year, additional resources are essential to meet the continued high demand for services in this area.

Supplemental local impact aid to Anne Arundel and Howard Counties and the City of Laurel to provide free food, vital programming like medical and dental services, and other necessities to backstretch workers employed at Laurel Race Course and low-income families living within one mile of the Laurel Race Course ensures they do not have to choose between having enough to eat and paying for other essentials such as rent, heat, or transportation to and from work. As such, we thank you for your consideration and urge a favorable report on SB 595.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Leah Paley".

Leah Aiello Paley, LMSW
Chief Executive Officer
Anne Arundel County Food Bank

LisaGeraghtyHB0337.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Geraghty

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of HB0337:

Greetings, esteemed members of the committee. My name is Lisa Geraghty, and I'm writing to you as a board member of the Racetrack Chaplaincy of Maryland. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to speak on behalf of an organization that has played a crucial role in my life, and in the lives of so many others in our community.

I would like to take a moment to speak directly to the impact that Pastor Ron has had on me personally, and why I strongly believe that the work of the Racetrack Chaplaincy is essential for the well-being of people who often face unique challenges. Pastor Ron is a truly remarkable and compassionate individual. He is a kind, understanding, and encouraging chaplain who has been a source of light during some of the darkest times in my life.

A few months ago, I went through a traumatic event, and during that incredibly difficult time, Pastor Ron reached out to me. His care, support, and wisdom helped me tremendously as I navigated through that period. Not only did he provide me with immediate comfort, but he has continued to check in with me over the following months, offering encouragement and reminding me that I am not alone. Every time I meet with him, I feel uplifted and inspired. Pastor Ron's own life story—how he has faced and overcome significant hardships with grace—serves as a powerful example to all of us. His resilience is truly inspiring, and it's something he shares with those he serves.

For many of us who work on the backstretch, our schedules make it difficult to participate in a traditional church community. We miss the fellowship and support that others may find in their local congregations because we are working on Sundays. The Racetrack Chaplaincy has been a lifeline for many of us, offering a space for spiritual growth, community, and emotional support, especially when it feels like we are disconnected from the world around us.

Pastor Ron and the entire Chaplaincy team have provided us with a sense of belonging, and I know from personal experience how much that means. I truly believe that expanding the services of the Racetrack Chaplaincy would create an even greater positive impact, not just for me, but for many people who are experiencing mental, emotional, and spiritual hardships. This is a community that needs this support, and with your help, we can continue to grow and serve even more individuals in need.

I ask that you please support HB0337 and vote in favor of this critical funding. The lives that this grant will help improve are immeasurable. Your vote has the potential to provide healing, hope, and strength to those who need it most.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lisa Geraghty

Testimony on SB 595^March 6 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Kaye Vavasour

Position: FAV

**Testimony on SB 595
March 6, 2025
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Maryland Senate**

Chair Guzzone and Vice Chair Rosapepe

MY NAME IS MARY KAYE VAVASOUR and I am appearing in support of SB 595 the State Lottery Fund—Laurel Race Course—Local Impact Aid.

I have been a resident of the Laurel/Beltsville area for almost 30 years and have been active in local civic affairs as the President of my Homeowners Association and member of the Vansville Heights Civic Association.

I grew up around thoroughbred racing—my family is from the Saratoga Springs area, and I spend August there with family and friends who are active participants as owners and breeders.

I have been an active advocate for thoroughbred aftercare since 2007, on both the national and state level. I have twice testified in the House of Delegates in support of legislation to provide funding for aftercare, and I take care of a Maryland-bred mare who I rescued in 2017 –she lives at The Foxie G Foundation in Union Bridge and I am active in fundraising for them.

Despite all of that involvement with racing for over 50 years, I came to an awareness of the needs of the backstretch community by happenstance.

Last August, I visited Chuck Simon, a former trainer and friend at Saratoga Hospital. Chuck had only recently been diagnosed with colon cancer and was days away from dying. While not nationally known, Chuck was highly regarded in racing for his horsemanship and his candid opinions about the sport, which he shared in his “Going in Circles” podcast.

Several well-known trainers got their start in Racing as assistant trainers to Chuck, including Breeders Cup winners Cherie DeVaux and Phil D’Amato, as well as Danny Gargan, who trained Dornoch, last year’s Belmont Stakes winner.

His hospital room was a clearinghouse of famous trainers, owners, jockeys and sports media figures—as well as many grooms, hotwalkers and other modest participants in the sport.

Over the 4 days that I visited him, I asked him what advice he would give to the team that was reinventing racing in Maryland—he had two suggestions

- 1. Make sure you have enough race days because thoroughbreds need to race in order to learn how to be racehorses**
- 2. Take better care of the backstretch workers.**

He introduced me to Nick Karas from the NY Racetrack Chaplaincy, and Nick connected me to the Maryland Racetrack Chaplain, Pastor Ron Singh.

Pastor Ron invited me to his Wednesday night service for backstretch workers and it was a revelation. Since then, I've spent many hours visiting with backstretch workers and advocates, talking to trainers and industry participants about the current situation ---of a sport in transition, with significant challenges, both regulatory, financial, and competitive with other forms of gambling... but the one thing everyone is in agreement on is the NEED TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF THE PEOPLE WHO TAKE CARE OF THE HORSES. It is not an exaggeration to say the sport cannot exist without them. Very few are aware of the difficulties they overcome to do that—and how indebted we are to them for their willingness to make it their life's work.

MTHA and its Foundation, along with The Maryland Jockey Club provide significant support to the backstretch community but there is great competition for their limited funds.

With this bill and the efforts of MTROA to build a world-class thoroughbred training facility at Shamrock Farm, including modern facilities for backstretch workers, I believe Maryland has an opportunity to demonstrate to the industry and the general public that caring for this segment of the thoroughbred racing workforce is an essential component to

making Maryland racing a healthy and successful sport, one in which the state of Maryland has made an enormous financial investment. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that “Maryland is now in the Racing business”. I urge you to reaffirm Maryland’s commitment to these essential workers in that business and pass SB 595.

SB595 - State Lottery Fund – Laurel Race Course –

Uploaded by: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

Position: FAV



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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ASHANTI MARTINEZ, CHAIR

GABRIEL ACEVERO, VICE-CHAIR

DENI TAVERAS, TREASURER

JOE VOGEL, SECRETARY

JASON A. AVILA GARCIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair
Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair
Budget and Taxation Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: March 6, 2025
RE: SB595 – State Lottery Fund – Laurel Race Course –
Local Impact Aid

The MLLC supports SB595 – State Lottery Fund – Laurel Race Course – Local Impact Aid

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of SB595.

This bill directly supports backstretch workers at the Laurel Race Course, many of whom are Latino immigrants. These workers often face barriers such as limited access to healthcare, language challenges, and social service gaps. The bill ensures that funds are used for essential services like health and mental health care, addiction support, counseling, and wellness programs, which are critical for the well-being of Latino workers and their families. By requiring nonprofits receiving funds to employ Spanish-speaking staff or offer translation services, the bill acknowledges and addresses the unique needs of non-native English speakers, promoting equitable access to resources.

Specifically, this bill proposes requiring the Maryland Comptroller to distribute \$500,000 annually in supplemental local impact aid from the proceeds of the Racetrax lottery game to Anne Arundel County, Howard County, and the City of Laurel. The aid is designated for programs and services benefiting communities surrounding the Laurel Race Course, including health and mental health services, counseling, addiction treatment, social services, and wellness programs.

The mandate that Anne Arundel County allocate its share of the funds as grants to nonprofit organizations with experience supporting backstretch workers and providing services for non-English speakers will have substantial impacts on the Latino community. This legislation represents a step forward in addressing systemic inequities and ensuring that Latino communities surrounding the race course receive the aid and support they need.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on SB595.

Raul MenaSB0595.pdf

Uploaded by: Raul Mena

Position: FAV

Ways and Means Committee:

REF: HOUSE BILL 337

Subject: Funding for Laurel Racetrack Chaplaincy of Maryland

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing on behalf of the community at Laurel Race Track to request that our local Chaplaincy be provided with adequate funding for the invaluable services they render to our track's staff, jockeys, trainers, and everyone associated with the race track.

As you know, the Racetrack Chaplaincy of Maryland via its Chaplain and board of directors have been a steadfast pillar of support for our community, offering spiritual advice, guidance, emotional support, and practical assistance to all those in need. Whether it's providing counseling during difficult times, leading memorial services, or simply being a comforting presence, Chaplain Ronald's contributions have significantly impacted our community's well-being.

Given the demanding nature of the work at the race track, the presence of a chaplain has been indispensable in promoting mental and emotional health among our members. Recognizing the need for additional funding to support and expand their dedication and service would not only validate their efforts but also ensure the continued provision of these essential services.

We implore you to consider the essential needs that face the residents of the race track and give consideration to voting for this bill. A positive outcome of this bill would serve to enhance the commitment and impact the services provided to our community. We believe that this would be a positive step towards acknowledging the vital role they play in maintaining the morale and spirit of everyone involved with all those working together to improve the lives of the entire workforce that sustains this industry.

Thank you for your consideration and understanding.

Sincerely,

Raul Mena

Storehouse Ministries Written.pdf

Uploaded by: Ronald Singh

Position: FAV

Storehouse Ministries International DbA: Racetrack Chaplaincy of Maryland

ATT: Senate and Budget Committee

Storehouse Ministries dba:

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.

wes hamilton SB0595.pdf

Uploaded by: Weston Hamilton

Position: FAV

Dear Honorable Members of the General Assembly,

My name is Weston Hamilton and I am currently a jockey at Laurel Park. I have been riding races for over 8 years, 5 of them in Maryland. During the 3 years I spent in Oklahoma I was blessed by the ministry of the Racetrack chaplaincy established there. The Chaplain was a defining figure in my life as he presented the gospel message to me and baptized me. The life changes that have occurred since then have been significant. I have been able to walk alongside other struggling jockeys and encourage them with the hope and assurance that I now have. The mental and physical pressures of riding races are not insignificant, and it is easy to let the job define you and allow depression to creep in during the difficult times. Such struggles can turn to tragedy as seen in the suicide of my fellow jockey, Avery Wiseman in Maryland 2023.

Prayer before races is something all of the jockeys look forward to before racing. It is encouraging, helps us focus energy before the races, and it's a time for sharing the word, and time to dedicate focus and life towards God.

Chaplain is so necessary. Ron's availability is a daily reminder that someone is there, person to person every day.

Weston Hamilton

Anne Arundel County _FWA_SB595.pdf

Uploaded by: Ethan Hunt

Position: FWA



March 6, 2025

Senate Bill 595
State Lottery Fund - Laurel Race Course - Local Impact Aid
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS** Senate Bill 595 – State Lottery Fund - Laurel Race Course - Local Impact Aid. This enabling Bill would direct \$500,000 annually in supplemental local impact aid to the community around the Laurel Race Course in Anne Arundel County, Howard County, and the City of Laurel.

For the past several years, Anne Arundel County has received \$357,143 annually in local impact aid to be used within the three mile radius of the Laurel Race Course. By executive order, Anne Arundel County created a Laurel Race Course Impact Advisory Committee (LRCIAC) to recommend to the County Executive the use of the funds each year. The LRCIAC is made up of nine county residents within the 3 mile radius, one representative of the Laurel Race Course, the County Councilmember representing Councilmanic District 4, and the Senator and three Delegates representing Maryland Legislative District 32.

The LRCIAC process ensures funding is distributed in an open and transparent process. All meetings are open to the public, the deliberation process includes an integrated public comment period, and funding decisions are posted on the LRCIAC webpage as well as in the annual County budget book.

The LRCIAC has been instrumental in guiding funding decisions within the three mile radius over many years. Thanks to the efforts of the committee, the 198 corridor has a landscaped median, fire and rescue equipment has been updated, and additional library services have been launched. Grants have supported local students and a heritage festival, and addressed food insecurity, security needs, road beautification.

Anne Arundel County is appreciative of the local impact aid we are able to invest in the communities around the Laurel Race Course each year. We support SB 595 to increase funding to a community with needs that undoubtedly exceed current funding availability. However, we respectfully request that the use requirements specific to Anne Arundel County for the supplemental local impact aid be streamlined to allow a distribution process parallel to the one already established. Streamlining of these requirements will avoid the need for duplicative administrative processes.

Anne Arundel County urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT** report on SB 595.

Steuart Pittman
County Executive

SB 595 - State Lottery Fund - Laurel Race Course -

Uploaded by: Jennifer Beskid

Position: INFO

Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency

Wes Moore, Governor • John Martin, Director



Montgomery Park Business Center
1800 Washington Blvd., Ste. 330
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Tel: 410-230-8800
TTY users call Maryland Relay
www.mdlottery.com

DATE: March 4, 2025
BILL NO: Senate Bill 595
BILL TITLE: State Lottery Fund – Laurel Race Course – Local Impact Aid
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
POSITION: Information

The Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency (Agency) submits the following for informational purposes.

Bill Summary:

Senate Bill 595 proposes supplementing local impact aid to Anne Arundel County, Howard County, and the City of Laurel from the proceeds of the Racetrax® Lottery Game. Doubling the amount of local impact aid to these jurisdictions is expected to support increased programs and services to the communities surrounding Laurel Race Course, including health and wellness, counseling, addictions services, social services, nutrition and wellness, and transportation services. The Agency currently provides \$500,000 in local impact aid via funds from Video Lottery Terminals (gaming revenues).

Background:

- For decades, the Lottery Fund was primarily used to make allocations to the Maryland Stadium Authority and in 2015, it began to be used to make allocations to other special interests.
- Lottery funds have not typically been used for local impact grants for jurisdictions or for venues related to horse racing, as this industry receives a contribution directly from casino gaming revenue.
- Senate Bill 595 would double the amount provided via local impact aid by allocating funds from Racetrax®.
- Racetrax® is a computer-animated Lottery game that offers the thrill of horse racing and the payout and prizes of a Keno style game.
- In FY24, Racetrax generated \$315.1 million in sales, accounting for 11.5% of total lottery sales.
- Racetrax® accounted for \$64.7 million (9.2%) of the Lottery's FY24 profit.

Rationale:

The allocation of funds from the State Lottery Fund to special funds decreases the amount of money transferred to the General Fund. Allocating any additional revenue from the State Lottery Fund will place the State's AA Bond Rating at risk of being downgraded. The Board of Revenue Estimates (BRE) considers total lottery revenues and makes projections based on the revenues less the current distributions. Table 1 reflects the projected distribution of lottery funds as well as the coverage amounts for mandated disbursements. The coverage amount is determined by dividing the total lottery revenue by the total mandated disbursement. When the coverage amount is 3.1x or lower, the bond rating can be downgraded. BRE has projected, based on current allocations, that the coverage amount will be 3.1x in FY26 and 2.9x in FY27 and FY28. Adding an additional allocation of

\$500,000 reduces the coverage further leaving Maryland at risk of having its AA Bond rating downgraded.

Table 1 – Projected Coverage Amounts

Distribution of Lottery Fund (Millions)	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
TOTAL LOTTERY REVENUE	671	664	665	666
MD Stadium Facilities	14.2	14.2	3.4	3.4
Camden Yards - Football	34.9	34.9	45.0	45.0
Camden Yards - Baseball		40.9	41.6	41.6
MD Veterans Trust Fund	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
RCDF		29.3	29.3	29.3
AA County & Baltimore City	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.0
Baltimore City School Construction	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.
MD International Fund				
Michael E. Busch Sports Fund	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
MD Humanities Council for History	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Maggie McIntosh School Arts Fund	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Sports Entertainment Facilities Financing Fund	12.4	12.4	25.0	25.0
Major Sports & Entertainment Event Program Fund	7.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
MD DOT Bus Rapid Transit System	27.0	27.0	27.0	27.0
PGCFF	27.0	27.0	27.0	27.0
TOTAL MANDATED DISBURSEMENTS	147	214	226	226
COVERAGE OF MANDATED DISBURSEMENTS	4.6x	3.1x	2.9x	2.9x
GENERAL FUND	524	450	439	440

Should you have any questions about this Letter of Information, please contact Jennifer Beskid, Director Legislation and Policy at 443-571-4390 or Jennifer.beskid1@maryland.gov.