

testDelegate Mary A.  
Lehman

*Legislative District 21*  
Prince George's and  
Anne Arundel Counties

Environment and Transportation  
Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**HB 337**

**State Lottery Fund – Laurel Race Course – Local Impact Aid**

**SUPPORT**

Good afternoon, Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair and esteemed Ways and Means Committee members.

For the record I'm Delegate Mary Lehman and I am asking for your favorable consideration of HB 337, Laurel Race Course, Local Impact Aid, which would establish supplemental local impact aid from the State Lottery Fund to assist communities living on and in the immediate vicinity of the Laurel Race Course.

This bill has not been previously introduced.

**WHAT THE BILL DOES**

This targeted legislation would provide \$500,000 annually from the proceeds of the Racetrax lottery game to be shared proportionally between Anne Arundel County, Howard County, and the City of Laurel. These funds would support critical services for backstretch workers at Laurel Race Course, including:

- Health and mental health services
- Individual and family counseling
- Addiction treatment and support
- Social services
- Nutrition and wellness programs
- Transportation to medical services

The bill requires that Anne Arundel County distribute these funds through grants to qualified non-profit organizations that:

- Have experience working with backstretch workers
- Employee Spanish-speaking staff or provide translation services
- Deliver services at or within one mile of the track
- Serve both track workers and residents in the surrounding 20724 zip code.

This legislation addresses pressing needs in our racing communities while establishing strong accountability measures. The supplemental aid would only continue while Laurel Park remains an active racing facility with resident backstretch workers. The funds must be used for providing direct services, and not administrative overhead.

Backstretch workers are vital to Maryland's thoroughbred racing industry as it undergoes a series of historic changes aimed at preserving and revitalizing its operations. With the closure of Pimlico Race Course for rebuilding, and the movement of the 2026 Preakness Stakes to Laurel Race Course, the backstretch communities of both race courses have been consolidated at Laurel Park while a new Pimlico and a separate training facility are constructed.

The increased burden on already crowded facilities and existing track-based social service programs is significant. The majority of these workers are immigrants with H2B visas whose access to basic welfare and social services for themselves and their families is a daily struggle due to language barriers, transportation challenges and limited resources. They are skilled workers who have dedicated their lives to the care of thoroughbred race horses—a job that can be dangerous, in weather conditions that are often onerous, with little time off, and for hundreds of them--far away from their families who depend on their financial support.

This modest investment from existing lottery proceeds will help ensure these workers and their neighboring communities receive essential support services.

I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 337.





