



MARYLAND JOCKEY CLUB



House Bill 1240

Sports Wagering – Wagers on Historical Horse Races – Authorization Unfavorable (UNF)

March 5, 2026

Chair Jheanelle K. Wilkins
House Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chair Wilkins and members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

We thank you for your steadfast commitment to the State's thoroughbred racing industry and the thousands of owners, trainers, and breeders that call Maryland home. On behalf of the Maryland Jockey Club, Inc. ("TMJC") and the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Inc. ("MTHA") **we respectfully oppose House Bill 1240**. TMJC and MTHA have serious concerns about the bill's potential cannibalization of existing pari-mutuel and Video Lottery Terminal ("VLT") revenues that are the lifeblood of the State's thoroughbred industry and the Pimlico Plus redevelopment plan that is currently underway.

TMJC and MTHA appreciate the sponsors' support of their local satellite simulcast betting facilities ("OTBs") that also hold retail sports wagering licenses, and their desires for additional forms of gaming. But we cannot support legislation that attempts to use horse racing as nothing more than proxy random number generators to underpin 4,000 gaming terminals that look, play, and sound exactly like VLTs authorized by the General Assembly (*see*, [IGT's Cash Climb Historical Horse Racing \(HHR\) Demo Video](#)). Even the nonpartisan Department of Legislative Services has previously cautioned against the substitution effect of Marylanders simply shifting their gaming spend from VLTs to HHR machines – with little to no upside, and potentially significant downside – to the Purse Dedication Account.

Furthermore, under both current Maryland law (Title 11, Subtitle 8 of the Business Regulation Article) and the Federal Interstate Horse Racing Act ("IHA" §§ 3301 through 3307), all thoroughbred pari-mutuel wagering in the State (conducted in-person at Laurel Park or Pimlico; at an off-track OTB; remotely via a simulcast television agreement; or through an advance deposit

wager conducted on a smartphone) requires the consent and approval of TMJC, MTHA, the Maryland Horse Breeders Association (“MHBA”) and the State Racing Commission (“MRC”).

These statutory consents and approvals are critical components of both the Federal IHA and Maryland’s longstanding regulatory framework designed to protect the interests of Maryland’s Horsemen and Breeders – and are completely upended by House Bill 1240 (*see*, page 3, lines 14 and 22) with respect to HHR.

We also cannot support the proposed provisions of HB 1240 that allow pari-mutuel wagering pools to be regulated and approved by the State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission (“SLGCC”) without the traditional consents and approvals of TMJC, MTHA, MHBA, and MRC. Pari-mutuel wagering in any form should not be regulated by SLGCC in the same manner as [RaceTrax](#) or [NHL Hockey](#). The [stated mission of MRC](#) is to “regulate pari-mutuel betting in Maryland through the implementation and enforcement of policies, and to safeguard the participants in racing, as well as the betting public” – and should respectfully remain so.

We truly appreciate the Committee’s consideration and request an **unfavorable report on House Bill 1240**.

Sincerely,



Bill Knauf
President, TMJC



Katharine M. Voss
President, MTHA