

HISTORICAL HORSE RACING AUTHORIZATION HB1240

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Chair Wilkins and Vice Chair Feldmark,

My name is Chris Calitri, and I am the Director of Historical Horse Racing at Ainsworth Game Technology. I am here to offer testimony in support of HB 1240 authorizing the legalization of HHR in the state of Maryland.

Historical Horse Racing, or HHR, is a form of pari-mutuel wagering already operating in many other states, where players bet into a common pool rather than playing against the house. HHR machines allow players to wager on previously run U.S. horse races, making it distinct from casino VLTs. Players can either manually select the order of finish using anonymized data on horses, trainers, and jockeys, or choose an auto-handicap “quick pick” option for faster play. Strong safeguards ensure players cannot identify specific races or horses for an unfair advantage.

OTBs are already licensed gaming locations, and pari-mutuel wagering is legal at the OTBs, so HHR simply adds a new variation of pari-mutuel wagering to the legal activities that are already permitted on-site. The current OTB locations in Frederick, Washington County, and Colonial Beach are small, locally-owned businesses that are steadily bleeding customers to out-of-state casinos. HHR at these sites will complement these sites, and help them compete with Charles Town, WV – not with Maryland casinos.

By modernizing OTB offerings and recapturing play that is currently leaving the state, HHR can generate substantial new revenue to help fund the Blueprint. For these reasons, I am asking for your support of HB 1240.

HISTORICAL HORSE RACING AUTHORIZATION SB639 / HB1240

WHAT HHR IS

Historical Horse Racing (HHR) is a form of pari-mutuel wagering occurring in several other states, including neighboring Virginia.

HHR Machines allow players to wager on previously-run US horse races using a modern slots-style gaming interface.

Players can manually select order of finish using anonymized information about horses, trainers and jockeys or can use auto-handicap “quick pick” for fast play.

- Protections ensure that players cannot identify specific races or horses for an unfair advantage.

HHR prizes come from a pool built up from player bets (parimutuel) instead of playing against the house.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Maryland’s longstanding off-track betting parlors (OTBs) are dying due to introduction of casinos and mobile sports wagering.

HHR lets OTBs deploy horse racing’s rich history in a modern, fun, accessible format.

OTB sites are already gaming sites, this is just a variation on the types allowed already.

OTB sites are in Frederick, Washington Co., and Southern MD/VA, where gaming is being lost to out-of-state casinos. OTBs will not compete with Maryland casino sites.

Substantial new revenues to help fund the Blueprint.

