



Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association
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Ohio House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
The Ohio Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Re.: H.B. 665

December 7, 2020

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chairman Schaffer, Ranking Member O'Brien and Members of the Ohio Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Renée Mancino and I am providing written testimony as the Executive Director of the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association (OHHA).

The Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association was established in 1953 and is the only non-profit association serving over 3,700 of Ohio's active Standardbred horse owners, breeders, trainers, drivers and fans who participate in the sport of standardbred racing in the Buckeye State at four commercial racetracks and sixty-six racing County Fairs. The mission of the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association is to preserve, protect, promote and serve the entire Standardbred industry in Ohio and beyond.

The Association provides direct and substantial fiscal support to all fairs racing or not, by supplementing the live horseracing tax generated Ohio Fairs Fund monies that are distributed. The direct support the Association provides follows the same codified formula provided-for in RC. 3769.082 and 3769.0811. Including 2020, Ohio's Horsemen have contributed more than \$26 million since 2015 in support of Ohio's sixty-six racing Fairs via capital improvements grants, stakes purses, signature race grants, on-track insurance, and the Little Brown Jug sponsorship.

In addition to providing on-track representatives at each of the four extended pari-mutuel harness racetracks in Ohio, the Association provides support for twenty-one of the Buckeye State's 66 Racing Fairs with the Ohio Fair Racing Conference. The Association provides Regional Coordinators to service individuals and Fair Boards at those 21 racing fairs. In a typical year, the Association also provides a fully staffed and stocked statewide advertising, marketing, and on-site "Racing with the Stars" promotional campaign at 60-66 fair locations, including the Ohio State Fair. Racing with the Stars provides interactive youth and fan-based activities and initiatives that promote agriculture and standardbred racing.

The OHHA would like to commend Representatives Jones and Wilkin, the members of this Committee, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, and the Ohio Fair Managers Association for their work on House Bill 665.

The OHHA supports this legislation, specifically dealing with the Ohio Fairs Fund distribution to facilitate flexibility and feasibility that has arisen during the coronavirus pandemic, while encouraging horse racing in a safe and efficient manner.

Relative to standardbred racing at the county fair locations, the Bill provides clarity for alternative accommodations and last-minute rescheduling of racing dates and host locations when under an Emergency Declaration. The Bill also provides clarification and protection for the Ohio Fairs Fund distribution when the fair may be cancelled, but standardbred racing can safely be conducted despite the

cancellation. Also clarified is oversight on the use of the Fair Funds and return by county agricultural societies, independent agricultural societies, and the Ohio Expositions Commission when under a State of Emergency that may result in a fair's standardbred racing program ultimately being cancelled.

The OFMA works tirelessly to provide cohesive, safe, community-focused fairs and events, and we have enjoyed working with them and the Department of Agriculture over the years to bring these events to communities throughout Ohio. The County Fairs are an integral part of the community and standardbred racing is proud to support the grassroots efforts of the Ohio Fairs. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. The OHHA supports H.B. 665, and we would be happy to answer any questions you may have via e-mail or phone.

Sincerely,



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