



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1188

H.P. 793

House of Representatives, March 20, 2025

**An Act to Include Harness Racing with Other Sports for Purposes
of Sports Wagering**

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative COOPER of Windham.
Cosponsored by Senator BLACK of Franklin and
Representatives: CRAY of Palmyra, FROST of Belgrade, GUERRETTE of Caribou, HALL of
Wilton, PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft.

1 **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not
2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3 **Whereas,** Maine harness racing is an important historic sport; and

4 **Whereas,** attracting new fans to Maine harness racing is critical to the future
5 well-being of the industry and agriculture; and

6 **Whereas,** the regulation of harness racing is under the jurisdiction of the Department
7 of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry while the regulation of sports wagering is under
8 the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Safety; and

9 **Whereas,** this dual regulatory environment has created a situation in which harness
10 racing may not be shown and wagered upon at all physical sports wagering locations; and

11 **Whereas,** the 2025 racing season commences in April and this legislation must take
12 effect before the 2025 racing season commences; and

13 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
14 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
15 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
16 therefore,

17 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

18 **Sec. 1. 8 MRSA §275-B,** as amended by PL 2023, c. 51, §1, is further amended to
19 read:

20 **§275-B. Sale of pari-mutuel pools**

21 The following persons may sell pari-mutuel pools on horse racing in accordance with
22 this chapter and rules adopted by the commission.

23 **1. Racetracks.** A person licensed pursuant to section 271 to conduct harness horse
24 racing with pari-mutuel betting may sell pari-mutuel pools and common pari-mutuel pools
25 for simulcast races. The seller must be within the enclosure of the racetrack where the
26 licensed race or race meet is conducted or, within the licensee's slot machine facilities
27 licensed pursuant to section 1011 or at any licensee's facility licensed pursuant to section
28 1206.

29 **2. Off-track betting facility.** A person licensed pursuant to section 275-D to operate
30 an off-track betting facility may sell pari-mutuel pools at that licensed facility.

31 ~~**3. Facilities approved by commission.** Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter~~
32 ~~to the contrary, a person licensed pursuant to section 271 to conduct harness horse racing~~
33 ~~with pari-mutuel betting may sell pari-mutuel pools and common pari-mutuel pools for~~
34 ~~simulcast races at a facility if approved by the commission under this subsection. The~~
35 ~~commission may approve a facility under this subsection only if it is located within the~~
36 ~~same county as the commercial track where the race or races are conducted, it is not located~~
37 ~~within the same municipality as an off-track betting facility licensed under section 275-D~~
38 ~~and the municipal officers of the municipality in which the facility is located approve of~~
39 ~~the sale of pari-mutuel pools or common pari-mutuel pools at the facility. A person~~
40 ~~authorized to operate a facility that receives approval under this subsection shall provide~~

1 the municipality in which the facility is located 5% of the track share of the commission
2 allocated by section 286, subsection 5.

3 A person authorized to sell pari-mutuel pools and common pari-mutuel pools for simulcast
4 races at a facility under this subsection may conduct at the facility any other activities
5 incidental to and permitted by that license under section 271.

6 This subsection is repealed January 1, 2026.

7 **Sec. 2. 8 MRSA §275-C, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 406, §4, is further
8 amended to read:

9 **1. Authority.** A person authorized to sell pari-mutuel pools on horse racing may sell
10 common pari-mutuel pools for simulcast races. The sale must be conducted within the
11 enclosure of the licensee's racetrack, at the licensee's slot machine facilities licensed
12 pursuant to section 1011, at the licensee's off-track betting facility or at ~~a facility approved~~
13 ~~by the commission in accordance with section 275-B, subsection 3~~ any licensee's facility
14 licensed pursuant to section 1206.

15 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation
16 takes effect when approved.

17 SUMMARY

18 This bill allows for the sale of pari-mutuel pools by persons who are licensed by the
19 Maine State Harness Racing Commission as commercial racetracks at facilities also
20 licensed by the Department of Public Safety, Gambling Control Unit for sports wagering.
21 It repeals a provision of law that restricts where persons licensed to conduct harness horse
22 racing with pari-mutuel betting may sell pari-mutuel pools for simulcast races that
23 otherwise would be repealed on January 1, 2026.