

Michael Cushing
Maine Harness Horsemens Association

Distinguished members of VLA have before you several Sports Wagering bills. Sports betting is a trend that is fast growing across the nation. The allure to join the other states is understandable, given the obvious economic gains for our state. However it is crucial that the approval of such legislation is done with considerable forethought, in order to maximize the benefits without damaging Maine's existing gaming partners.

That being said the Maine Harness Horsemens Association endorses only LD 1405. LD 1405 ties sports wagering to brick & mortar betting locations, including Maine's existing OTBs, commercial racetracks and casinos. This will strengthen these facilities, and more importantly introduce a new clientele to Maine harness racing. Harness racing is the industry that paved the way for all forms of gaming. Should a form of sports wagering be passed that does not consider the already fragile industry of harness racing, it could very well damage us beyond repair.

LD 1405 not only would assuredly expose more bettors to harness racing. But it also provides some monetary compensation for the gambling dollars that will likely be taken away from horse racing and to sports betting. This well thought out component of LD 1405 makes Maine's harness racing industry and agricultural fairs partners in a robust sports wagering endeavor.

It is the position of The Maine Harness Horsemens Association that LD 1405 is the only Sports Wagering bill offered that will not put our centuries long industry in jeopardy. Thank you for taking the time for listening to the concerns of the industry.

Sincerely

Mike Cushing