

DATE OF HEARING: Wednesday March 8, 2022, 1:00 pm

Honorable Senator Hickman, Honorable Representative Supica, Distinguished Members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

I am Keith Luke, an Augusta resident with a long professional background in economic development, and also a licensed horsemen. The last time I checked I had an interest in sixteen different thoroughbreds who race around the country with a partnership known as Donegal Racing. I also have an interest in a couple of standardbred pacers who are stabled here in Maine. I am here today to express my strong support for LD 731, An Act Regarding the Licensing of Persons to Conduct Advance Deposit Wagering.

Last year we had the good fortune of owning a horse – a very good horse – named Mo Donegal. He made it all the way to the Kentucky Derby – a trip that landed our group on the front page of the local newspaper. As this story was emerging, people would ask me – how can I bet on your horse? The short answer was that using the most convenient tool available, the ADW app provided by Hollywood Racing, they could not.

Our horse finished fifth in the Derby – but his best effort was yet to come. He came back five weeks later and won “The Test of Champions”, the Belmont Stakes. It was the experience of a lifetime. This was a win Maine residents could share in by wagering on the Hollywood Racing app, because New York tracks are available on its site.

The current wagering landscape is confusing to me – and if it is confusing to me, it has to be even more confusing for casual racing fans. Just last week we won a race at Delta Downs in Louisiana, at a track not included in the Hollywood Racing app, because the track is owned by Churchill Downs.

The current approach to ADW wagering in Maine is not working, and is preventing one of the biggest wagering events in all of sports – the Kentucky Derby – out of play for those who use ADW. The best possible remedy for this is for the state to license additional ADW providers who will provide access to the widest range of tracks in both thoroughbred and harness racing, which will maximize the revenue that the State of Maine takes for its purposes.

Thank you, and once again I urge you to support LD 731.