



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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March 31, 2025

Testimony
in Support of

LD 1188 An Act to Include Harness Racing with Other Sports for Purposes of Sports Wagering

Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, I am State Representative Mark Cooper, of District 107, part of Windham. I am here to present **LD 1188 An Act to Include Harness Racing with Other Sports for Purposes of Sports Wagering**.

This bill is fairly simple. It provides that places licensed as in-person sports betting facilities are permitted to accept wagers on horse races as well. Maine Harness Racing has a proud history in our state and ensuring that it is showcased among other sporting events is critical to the future growth. This is not just important for the drivers, trainers, owners, grooms, feed stores, and others who make up the fabric of our community, but also agricultural fairs which showcase this historic sport to fairgoers.

This was also included in a recommendation to this committee in the 131st Legislature from the Maine Gambling Control Unit in a report on Advanced Deposit Wagering, which is essentially online betting on horse racing like the online betting on sports. This bill encourages people to invest in Maine itself and build community around the sport. Michael Cianchette from First Tracks, southern Maine's race track, will be here to answer questions about what this bill means on the ground.

Lastly, this is an emergency because the racing season begins on April 11th. Showcasing Maine athletes -- both horses and drivers -- should be something we all support, and it would be a strange result that lets Mainers and visitors alike wager on the Red Sox but not our own, homegrown racing.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mark C. Cooper".

Mark C. Cooper
State Representative