



Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs

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Testimony LD 1405

Good morning Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo and Honorable members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee. My name is Barry W. Norris and I'm here this morning representing the Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs, as their Executive Director, in supporting LD 1405. I have included in my written testimony a letter signed by the presidents of the fairs supporting the bill, as well as a Quick Facts sheet for your review. I have chosen to use this format in order to save time this morning rather than attempting to get all of those facts and figures within the allotted three minutes.

As you are well aware, our fairs rely heavily on the revenues generated from Harness Racing as well as gaming operations. Without this support at least 20% of our fairs would likely cease to exist in the near future.

Maine fairs strive to showcase every aspect of agriculture, and in so doing offer each fairgoer a memorable and all encompassing educational experience. The funding that this bill would provide will make it possible for our fairs to expand these educational opportunities for their fair goers and members as well.

Without the anticipated income from 2020, which was eliminated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the previous fair season was economically devastating for our fairs. All of our fairs continue to struggle as they work towards providing a blue ribbon fair experience this year. Some fairs will look differently than in previous years BUT they will be going forward and guaranteeing that every fair goer will have a memorable time in 2021.

On behalf of the members and staff of our 26 fairs across our great state, I'd like to thank you for your time and consideration.

I'll make myself available for any questions you may have now or at the work session.

Thank you again.

Barry W. Norris