



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Larkin / Pretlow Hold Hearing On Future Of Horse Racing

William J. Larkin Jr.

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Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) and Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow (D-Mt.Vernon/Yonkers), Chairmen of the Senate and Assembly Standing Committees on Racing, Gaming & Wagering today held a Joint Legislative Hearing in Albany on the future of horse racing in New York State.

"We had the opportunity today to hear from a cross section of specialists within the horse racing industry," said Senator Larkin. "One thing that is abundantly clear is that the racing industry in New York State is struggling. However, with the right business model, we can develop a much needed economic stimulus for an industry that has the potential to generate even more jobs and revenue for New York."

Those testifying before Larkin's committee included, Michael Hoblock, Chairman of the New York State Racing & Wagering Board; Charles E. Hayward, President of the New York Racing Association; Tim Smith, President of Friends of New York Racing, Inc.; Jack Knowlton, Managing Partner of Sackatoga Stable; and Bennett Liebman of the Racing Program at Albany Law School; Raymond Casey President of New York City OTB; Robert Flynn, Executive Director of New York Thoroughbred Horsemen;

Robert Brooks, Executive Director of Harness Horse Breeders of New York State; Jeff Williams of New York Farm Bureau; Barry Ostrager, President of New York Thoroughbred Breeders, Inc.; Dennis Brida, Executive Director of New York Thoroughbred Breeders, Inc.; Larry Aaronson President of Nassau County OTB; Joseph Faraldo of the Standardbred Owners Association; Bruce Tubin of Western New York Harness Horsemen; Jeff Gregory, a harness driver at Yonkers Raceway; and Alice Allen, private owner and breeder of harness horses.

Speakers made recommendations to the Legislature on ways to: improve conditions and make horse racing more viable in New York State; the current and future management of the state's racing franchise; issues affecting the Standardbred and Thoroughbred racing industries; factors impeding the success of horse racing in New York State; the decrease in handle on in-state races; and gaming in surrounding states as direct competition to New York racing operations.

According to the New York State Horse Council:

The New York horse industry produces goods and services valued at \$1.7 Billion annually.

The national racing industry has a \$4.8 Billion impact on the New York economy.

258,100 New Yorkers are involved in the industry as owners, service providers, farmers, breeders, employees, volunteers and spectators.

The horse racing industry provides 12,800 full-time jobs in New York.

Over 150,000 horses reside in New York and 60% are involved in showing and recreation.

New York is the home of 9 racetracks with long seasons and numerous OTB facilities.

There are 401 thoroughbred breeding farms in New York creating jobs and preserving open space.

The combined business of breeding, raising and selling thoroughbreds is one of New York's largest agricultural enterprises.

A poll conducted by Friends of New York Racing, Inc. found that most New Yorkers value and support the state's Thoroughbred industry and favor expanded gaming at Thoroughbred racing facilities as a way to generate additional revenue for the state.

According to the survey, New Yorkers view horseracing favorably by nearly a 2-to-1 margin. When provided with facts about jobs, farms and economic impact, the support for the state's racing industry is even stronger.