

March 13th, 2025
House Federal and State Affairs Committee

Re: Support for SB 260

Kurt Eck
27332 W. 29th St. N
Andale, KS 67001

Chair Kessler and Committee Members:

My name is Kurt Eck and I am from Andale, Kansas. My family has bred, raised, and raced horses over the past 50 years in the state but for the past 10-15 years, we have focused on racing and breeding in Oklahoma. I want to continue that tradition here in the state and add to the investment my family has in rural Kansas.

With the passage of the constitutional amendment for pari-mutual racing in the late 1980's, our state realized how valuable the culture of the racing industry was. Once again, in 2007, the legislature recognized not only the cultural value of the industry, but also the economical value that it brings to agri-business across the state. They realized that the competition for the gaming dollar had become so intense, that the highly regulated pari-mutual and gaming landscape in Kansas had to change to ensure a vibrant horse industry, one that at one point was the 5th leading producer of quarter horse foals in the nation. This is an industry capable of producing thousands of jobs and injecting millions of dollars into local rural economies throughout the state.

Fast forward to 2022, and historical horse racing was approved under the pari-mutuel racing act. It is ironic to me that we will be able to wager on historical horse races in the state, but not on a live racing product from which these machines are manifested. The proposed bill intends to change that by distributing the tax revenue from HHR wagers back to the horse industry through the horse fair racing benefit fund and the Kansas horse breeders development fund. The horse fair racing benefit fund in particular was established years ago to help support small town racetracks through the parimutuel tax on the larger market racetracks in Wichita and Kansas City, which is what is being asked today.

Our family took great pride in the fair meets at Eureka and Anthony. The unique entertainment value of horse racing should not be underestimated, as we invited extended family and friends week after week to the races to enjoy what live racing has to offer. These fair meets were truly a family-oriented atmosphere that many entertainment venues cannot offer, and I want my children to experience what I was fortunate to experience.

But more importantly, the economic impact of a robust racing industry in Kansas would be in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Many states have created this environment by coupling HHR machines or gaming entertainment to live racing with great success. I would appreciate your support in making live racing in Kansas great again! Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kurt Eck