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Re.: Urgent Appeal in Opposition to S. 4547

December 10, 2020

I am providing an urgent request on behalf of the statewide horsemen in the Nations' Number One harness racing state, Ohio. Ohio is number one with 612 live days of harness racing at 4 pari-mutuel Racetracks and 66 County Fairs. Ohio has led the nation going on its sixth consecutive year for breeding standardbred mares, registered Ohio Sired standardbred foals, and registered Ohio standardbred owners. In Ohio there are 136 registered standardbred stallions standing at 51 farm locations statewide in 37 Ohio Counties. Data from Ohio's statewide horse racing industry in 2018 reflects a direct impact of over 21,000 jobs and an economic impact that exceeds \$2.8 billion with \$900 million in personal income for Ohioans. It is about supporting statewide agriculture in Ohio, and all provide a basis for the grass roots agricultural impact Standardbred racing has statewide.

We sent you a detailed Memorandum regarding H.R. 1754 and S.B. 4547 in October 2020. I am attaching that again to this correspondence to refresh your recollection. We thank you for your time and attention to that Memorandum and we appeal to you once again to act swiftly to protect Ohioans' interests in a year that was very difficult for agricultural businesses and small businesses alike.

In the October Memorandum, we were resolute in opposing S. 4547 as a standalone Bill in its current form. This was primarily due to Tenth Amendment state's rights issues, anti-commandeering principles, a blank-check grant for costs and expenses to fund the initiative, an indeterminate tax on racing's participants, and clear special interest directives not related to a rational basis for the legislation. If S. 4547 is passed in its current form, without thoughtful consideration on the merits, and consideration for the breed of standardbred racing, it will have a disastrous effect on Ohio's standardbred racing industry. The effect will be swift and catastrophic to Ohio's agriculturally based small businesses already hard-hit by the Pandemic and struggling.

We are informed and believe that Senate Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) will be seeking amendment of S. 4547 into a bi-partisan COVID-19 relief bill, an omnibus spending bill to provide stop-gap or full-year government funding, or potentially utilizing either or both vehicles for swift enactment within the next two weeks.

Our initial Memorandum outlined the serious and specific issues with S. 4547 as a standalone Bill. Without proper vetting on this legislation, Senators will not have a chance to debate S. 4547 on its own merits, and may be in the unfortunate position of voting against a COVID-19 relief bill and/or government funding bill unless it can be stripped out in advance.

If S. 4547 is not able to be stripped-out and vetted separately, the unfortunate casualty will be Ohio small businesspersons and Ohio agriculture. Additionally, openness and transparency are critical components to build

trust and accountability in a democracy. Without the ability to provide fair and balanced information and debate, citizens are not empowered, legislators are not accountable for their initiatives, and participation in public government is nullified in favor of special interests.

The OHHA and Ohio's statewide Horsemen request that you intervene on behalf of Ohio's statewide agribusinesses, oppose this legislation, and do whatever is necessary to ensure it remains as a standalone Bill to be considered, debated, and decided upon the merits.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter we would be happy to answer any questions you may have via e-mail or phone.

Sincerely,



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Enc.: 10-7-20 Horseracing and Safety Integrity Act OP LTR